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# FRANK MERRYWEATHER.

A NOVEL.

BY HENRY G. AINSLIE YOUNG, ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.



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# FRANK MERRYWEATHER.

## CHAPTER I.

When a man can contest the point by dint of equipage, and carry all on floundering before him with half a dozen of lackies and a couple of cooks—tis very well in such a place as Paris,—he may drive in at which end of a street he will.

*Sterne's Sentimental Journey.*

THE severe loss which Mr. Munroe had experienced soon after his arrival at Ulvacombe, suspended only for a short



time the ambitious views he had cherished in the East, and with the prosecution of which his return to England was so intimately associated. Indeed, the death of Mrs. Munroe, by depriving him of a companion, who not only exercised a permanent and important influence over his actions, but whose amiable disposition had insensibly won him from his ordinary pursuits, added to the absence of all those stirring incidents and motives for exertion which had been the daily food of his mind for so many years, left him more completely than ever a prey to that morbid yearning for distinction with which he had been so long pre-occupied.

This feeling had in no slight degree been increased by an intimation from Lord Carlbrook, that his eldest son, Lord Marsdale, was desirous, if agreeable to Mr. Munroe, to pay his addresses to his daughter. But scarcely had he become aware of the views entertained by his new and distinguished acquaintance,

when, just as he was about to assure Lord Marsdale that every opportunity should be afforded him for the prosecution of his suit, he was dismayed by Merryweather's avowal of the feeling that had grown up between his cousin and himself. His anger on that occasion has already been related, but after Merryweather's departure, he established sufficient control over himself to maintain a profound silence for several days on the subject which had so strongly excited his disapprobation. When however he ascertained beyond a doubt that his nephew had actually left England, he one morning took the opportunity of his sister and daughter being present to express his extreme displeasure. After repeating what he had himself said to Merryweather, he continued—"I have just cause to complain of you, Dorothy, for had you attended more to the duties which your position imposed upon you, and in the performance of which it is far more

desirable that women should excel, than in the pursuits for which you appear to have so infatuated a propensity, this had never happened. Let it pass, however.—For the future I hope you will be more circumspect. You, Constance,” continued Mr. Munroe, with more authority in the tone of his voice, “are perhaps less to blame, but at the same time you must have been fully aware that you were doing wrong in allowing such attentions to be paid you. I am aware that young ladies sometimes think that they are the best judges in these matters, but very erroneously, for when some indulgent parent allows them to follow their own bent, they invariably, and with some justice it must be allowed, in after life, complain bitterly of the sanction that was given to their caprices before they were competent to judge for themselves. Understand therefore, distinctly, that I am determined to do what I consider my duty, and I prohibit you from ever again

holding any intercourse with your cousin. And now let this subject be dropped, never again to be revived under any pretence whatever."

Mr. Munroe waited to see if any reply would be given to this address, but both Dorothy and Constance remaining silent, after a few turns up and down the room, he resumed—"I have not been indifferent to your interests, Constance, though you show such unwillingness to confide in me, and I will now mention the prospects that are in store for you. Lord Carlbrook has proposed that a marriage should take place between his eldest son and yourself. I have accepted so advantageous an offer. This very morning moreover, I received a letter from him, concurring in a suggestion I recently made of the propriety of our families becoming better acquainted, and we have in consequence agreed to visit Paris before the London season commences, and to spend some time there together."

"Indeed, sir," said Constance, "I can never accede to your wishes in this respect."

"You know not what you say, child," replied Mr. Munroe, in a tone of deep displeasure. "You have, however, heard how I intend to dispose of your hand, and you must therefore consider the matter as irrevocably arranged and settled."

So saying, Mr. Munroe left the room, conscious that nothing he could at present say, would further his views, but fully calculating upon the effect that would be produced, upon the pliant and ductile mind of his daughter, by the known inflexibility of his character, and by not appearing himself to entertain a doubt of her ultimate submission.

No sooner was Mr. Munroe heard to enter his own study, than Dorothy gave vent to the wrath she had managed, though with difficulty, to control whilst he was present.

“And so my brother attaches more importance to the romantic nonsense of a young lady and gentleman, than to the works of Linnæus! Just cause to complain indeed! Have I not always endeavoured to convince you of the elevating influence, the high moral tone produced in the mind, by studying the sciences.—Have I not struggled to prove to you that by such means we may strengthen it, till we gain a complete mastery over every other feeling than a desire for knowledge, and have I not also condemned in the strongest terms your devotion to the fictitious works of the Italian poets?”

Constance was far too much out of spirits to return any answer to this harangue, and she took advantage of a pause that now ensued to retire through one of the open windows into the garden, and amongst the shaded walks, where her cousin had so often kept her company, alternately to mourn over her

father's anger, and to hope that her lover would remain constant.

The approaching trip to Paris in company with Lord Carlbrook was now made a constant theme of conversation by Mr. Munroe, and on every occasion he was careful to expatiate upon the advantages of being allied to so distinguished a family, and to express his conviction of the happiness it would ultimately secure to his daughter. At last the period for departure arrived, and Mr. Munroe having previously heard from Lord Carlbrook, started with his sister and daughter for Brighton, where he was joined the day after his arrival by that nobleman and his family.

The Marquis of Carlbrook was a peer of ancient descent, who with the numerous quarterings in his arms, had inherited a list of family incumbrances not fewer in number, and his necessities, as before related, had brought about his acquaintance with Mr. Munroe.

He had many of the prejudices which belong to his class, and it required a vigorous effort on his part, strengthened by a sincere desire to promote the welfare of his children, to induce him to contemplate a connexion with Mr. Munroe's family. But with these prejudices he combined a noble presence, a kindly disposition, and no small share of the talents which had enabled his immediate ancestors to distinguish themselves in the service of the state.

It was evident that Lady Carlbrook once possessed great personal attractions. She was the daughter of an ancient and noble house, whose circumstances did not enable her to bring a large dowery to her Lord, but her family were as high in rank and antiquity as any amongst the aristocracy, and their descent might be lineally traced from those stout barons, who under the banners of Henry V. successfully maintained the chivalry of England on the plains of France. Her



early associations and education, as well as a naturally haughty disposition, had led her to bear with impatience the rude trials to which the comparatively narrow income of Lord Carlbrook had not unfrequently exposed her, and the struggle in her mind was far greater than in that of her husband, before she could induce herself to recruit the delapidated fortunes of her family by an alliance with that of the wealthy merchant. But she was warmly attached to her children, if attachment could be called a desire to see them surrounded by all the appliances of wealth and power, and for her eldest son in particular she cherished these views with an intensity which finally prevailed over every other feeling; but she nevertheless fondly hoped that Mr. Munroe's fortune, added to his own hereditary rank and talents, would enable him to eclipse the plebeian source from which she at length consented to derive one great means of his future aggrandizement.

To their son, Lord and Lady Carlbrook had bequeathed but a small portion of their good looks. But he undoubtedly inherited much of the talent of his father, though it was unaccompanied by that high sense of honor which ever preserved him from a base action, and he possessed all the strong passions of his mother, without her lofty spirit.

Such were the persons who now joined Mr. Munroe; and Constance, upon being introduced to him whose bride her father intended her to be, instantly felt a repugnance which she in vain attempted to conceal. Independently of her engagement to her cousin there was also much to justify this feeling, for although first appearances are proverbially deceptive, it was impossible not to trace a selfish disregard for the feelings of others, and an unrestrained arrogance in the hard repulsive features of Lord Marsdale.

To Paris the whole party forthwith departed, and during the journey, to

Constance's dismay, Lord Marsdale was scarcely ever absent from her side. It were perhaps impossible to conceive any thing more offensive than his manner towards her. In every word, every look, he plainly intimated,—I have consented to this, partly because you are the heiress to twenty thousand a year, and partly in compliance with the wishes of my family, and now I pay you more attention than I had intended, because I find you, contrary to my expectations, a very accomplished and attractive person.

Constance's aversion to him increased every minute, and on their arrival at one of those private hotels, in the Rue de Rivoli, which overlook the beautiful gardens of the Tuileries, and in the early spring at least combine all the resources of a wealthy and luxurious capital, with many of the associations of the country, she felt an indescribable relief when enabled to plead the fatigue of her

journey, she retired to the privacy of her own apartment.

Lord Carlbrook had an only daughter, Lady Clara Chalmers, who was in her sixteenth year. She had previously come to Paris on a visit to his wife's mother, a lady, who, by contracting a second marriage, had become very wealthy, and who had declared her intention to make Lady Clara her heiress.

On the day following the arrival of Lord Carlbrook and his party at the Hotel Windsor, as they were seated at the breakfast table, this young lady, who had heard of the arrival of her parents, suddenly made her appearance, followed, evidently by dint of great exertion, by her panting governess. With the buoyant spirits natural to her age, she ran into the room, and with joyous expressions threw herself into her mother's arms.

After she had also embraced her father and brother, Lady Carlbrook in-

roduced her to Mr. Munroe and Dorothy, but taking Constance, for whom she had always evinced great partiality, aside, she called her daughter to her and said, "This, dear Clara, is Miss Munroe, and I hope that during our stay in Paris you will find pleasure in each other's society."

"I am sure, mamma," said her daughter, "that we shall," and with the ingenuousness of youth, she instantly gave her hand to Constance and imprinted a kiss upon her cheek. Constance with a natural impulse returned the embrace, and when their glance afterwards met, it revealed how favourable was the first impression each had made upon the other. But before they could exchange many words together, Lord Marsdale, whose capricious temper led him to view with dissatisfaction this meeting between his sister and one whom he intended should become completely submissive to the dictates of

his will, interrupted their conversation somewhat abruptly, saying—"I don't know what time you can spare, Clara, but even if it is not limited, you should remember that we are of course anxious to hear as soon as you have made the acquaintance of Miss Munroë how you have passed your time in Paris."

"But Clara is not going to leave us!" said Lady Carlbrook, who instantly understood the feeling which had prompted her son to make this observation. "Before we left Town I wrote to say that she would stay with me during our residence here."

"I am sure I am very glad to hear it," he answered with a yawn, "but I confess I am under the impression that Clara will scarcely find the Hotel Windsor so well adapted for her as the residence of Lady Harlborough."

"Oh come, come," said the Marquis, in a tone of remonstrance, "it is her mother's wish that she should remain

with us, and that ought to suffice. But by the way," he continued, "we are wasting much valuable time, and we have more on our hands already than we shall well be able to get through to-day. Mr. Munroe, my son and myself are going to leave cards at the ambassador's, perhaps you will accompany us?"

Mr. Munroe, who accepted this invitation with evident pleasure, immediately rose and departed in company with Lord Carlbrook and his son, and Lady Carlbrook, having soon after quitted the apartment, the two young ladies lost no time in resuming their conversation.

The numbers of things Lady Clara had to tell her new acquaintance! First, however, she must learn her christian name. Constance? How pretty! Clara sounded frightful after it. No. It was not her fancy. She always had thought so. How old was Constance? Oh! there was very little difference then

between them, and she had so longed for some one near her own age to love. Of course Constance could speak French. Did she know any other languages? Could read Italian? How clever she must be. She herself had begun it several times, but had never got further than the first page of the grammar. Mademoiselle said she was idle, but how could that be when she had read as many as three novels in one week! Constance on her part soon felt her spirits brighten with so lively a companion, and described her home in Devonshire, and her pursuits. In less than an hour they perfectly knew each other, and had promised to be the most affectionate friends for ever. Just as they had arrived at this determination, Lady Carlbrook reappeared, ready dressed to go out, and as she glanced towards Constance, asked who would accompany her on a visit to Lady Harlborough.

"Constance *must* come and see grand-mamma," said Lady Clara, "and I wish



moreover to show her all my books, and hear what she thinks of my new dresses that I think so lovely."

"Why, you silly child," said Lady Carlbrook, laughing, "have you already begun to tax Miss Munroe's patience by these vanities!"

"They are not vanities, are they?" said Lady Clara, looking rather discomposed at this view of the subject. "Constance wishes to see them before having anything made for herself, so we must go with you, mamma."

"Very well then, dear," said Lady Carlbrook, "let us start at once."

This was readily assented to, and they were soon seated in the carriage that waited for them at the door, and drove off to Lady Harlbrough's house.

Lady Harlbrough was of diminutive stature, and rather too much *enbonpoint*. Notwithstanding her long residence abroad, she at first sight appeared to have been little acted upon by Parisian

influences, and was exceedingly antiquated in her dress, but there was a winning gentleness in her manner, and though far advanced in years, her blue eye was as bright as ever, and her voice still preserved its naturally melodious tones. Such moreover was the charm of her address, that she had no sooner spoken than she was at once transformed, in the eyes of Constance, from a somewhat ungainly person to one of unparalleled grace and attraction. This favourable impression was mutual, and it was not long before Lady Harborough, availing herself of an opportunity that offered, came to the side of Constance and said, "I am so glad to see you. My daughter had, in a letter, partly prepared me for the pleasure I was to derive from this visit, but I was far from imagining that the person, in whose praise she wrote, would so completely prepossess me. I hope you will not allow of our remaining only distant

acquaintances, but be often here during your stay in Paris."

Constance, touched by the kind manner of Lady Harlborough, promised with warmth to avail herself of the invitation, and Lady Clara, who overheard these words, clapped her hands with youthful glee, exclaiming, "How delightful! We can come here all day. What fun that will be."

Lady Harlborough's house was situated a few miles from Paris on the road to Versailles. A formal avenue of ancient trees in front, had happily survived the passage of foreign armies and the successive revolutions which had swept over the French metropolis, since the period of its construction in the reign of Louis XV. An ample "Cour d' Honneur," on the opposite side, succeeded by a "Jardin Anglais," occupied the ground which in an English mansion of the same size, would probably have been devoted to offices with well slated roofs, and

stables for the squire's hunters. The silver Seine was distinctly visible in the distance, and St. Cloud, on the outskirts of which the house was in fact situated, lent its attractions to the scene. The rooms of this beautiful mansion were spacious and lofty, and the nicely fitted mosaic of the polished flooring, presented so even a surface, as to make the fact of its being constructed of separate pieces of wood scarcely visible. The inconveniences also for which French houses are proverbial, had under the liberal management of its noble hostess disappeared, and the interior combined all the grandeur and elegance which French taste could supply with the substantial comforts of an English home. The garden was well stocked with shrubs and flowers of every kind that would flourish in the open air, while at the further extremity hothouses were placed for the culture of those that required more tender nursing.

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On this scene Dorothy, who had accompanied the party, dwelt with rapture. She had neither joined in the conversation, nor altered her position since she entered the room, but sat gazing out of the window like one entranced, and at last unable to endure such a state of feeling, she begged permission to give these treasures a closer inspection. This was readily granted, and she rushed with avidity to what she so poetically termed a "flowery banquet." For more than an hour did she stroll from shrub to shrub, gathering specimens in a state of unmitigated happiness, when having reached the end of the garden she cast a wistful look at the hothouses. Might she go in there? Would she not, were they her own, guard the treasures they contained with jealous watchfulness? A victim to doubt and uncertainty, she stood contemplating the glass edifice as if it were a temple that it would be

sacrilege to approach, when the door suddenly opened and an overdressed Frenchman, with a profusion of bows, begged Mademoiselle to enter. Dorothy required no pressing to accept this invitation, and entered with many and sincere expressions of gratitude. She was at first at some loss to know whether the assiduous attention paid her by this person, arose from excessive gallantry, or was the homage of an inferior, but in a short time she came to the conclusion that the former was the case, and having thereupon entered into conversation with him, she was confirmed in her opinion by the knowledge he pretended to display of botany. So extensive indeed was his apparent information on this subject, that to many of the plants he assigned long sounding names, of which Dorothy had never even heard, but after a little reflection she attributed this unaccountable circumstance to the different nomenclature which she thought per-

haps prevailed in France, or to their being disguised by a French pronunciation. So communicative moreover was her companion, so quickly was her attention drawn from one plant to another, and so unceasing was the roll of his tongue, that she found it frequently impossible to slip in a single word, and her doubt on this point therefore remained unsatisfied. Pleased, however, and flattered by the trouble her cicerone took on her behalf, and always willing to increase her stock of information, she would not have been averse to passing the remainder of the day listening to him, while she feasted her eyes on the numerous plants with which the hothouse was stocked, but remembering that she had now been absent from the house for nearly two hours, she expressed her regret at being able to stay no longer.

"Mademoiselle is going then? Ah, yes, I suppose so," said her companion,

drawing a deep breath, and casting his eyes to the ground.

Dorothy looked startled, but after a pause replied, "Perhaps Monsieur will be at the house of Lady Harlbrough again some day."

"Only in dis place," said her companion mysteriously, "could I see Mademoiselle, should she again honour me wid her company. In dat house," he continued, extending his hand to the residence of Lady Harlbrough, as if in the act of pushing it from him, "can I not go. Der are de reasons. But Mademoiselle loves flowers. I do love flowers too, and if Mademoiselle would condescend, we might on anoder day enjoy a passing time by talking of what we do tink so beautiful."

"It would indeed much rejoice me," said Dorothy, "again to hold converse on the topic for which I have such a predilection, with one who has given it so much attention, and therefore I will



endeavour to meet Monsieur here on the day after to morrow."

"Will Mademoiselle?" said her companion energetically, but checking himself he continued in a mournful tone of voice, "Ah! How great de disappointment should Mademoiselle forget! In such company as Mademoiselle's only can I cease to tink of de cares and troubles of my life, and Mademoiselle can derefore understand how much pleasure it will be to see her again. May I know Mademoiselle's name?"

"Dorothy," she said, in a low tone as she glanced up at her companion.

"Ah! Dat is magnificent! But how could it be oderwise? Will Mademoiselle condescend to hear my name? It is Alphonse."

"Alphonse," repeated Dorothy, as she placed her hand before her eyes. "Then that name will henceforth be associated in my mind with science and erudition."

"I do tank Mademoiselle Dorotee from

my heart," said Alphonse, passing his hand over his waistcoat, "but I not now seek to detain her. I do see dat she does wish now to go in."

"Yes, I must delay no longer, but at what time shall I have the pleasure of seeing Monsieur Alphonse on the day I have specified?"

"At any time of de day," said Alphonse, looking a second time mysterious, "I sall be here. But Mademoiselle must say noting. She must keep my secret. Some day I will explain. Adieu. May I take Mademoiselle's hand?"

Dorothy half raised her arm, and Monsieur Alphonse seized her hand with rapture, hastily imprinted a kiss upon it, and then hurrying away, was almost immediately out of sight.

What a noble person! thought Dorothy, as she now retraced her steps towards the house. Who could it be? Perhaps a Prince in disguise!

Before the evening a whole row

of cosmetics interspersed with specimens of the flowers which had formed the subject of her morning studies, were ranged on her dressing table.

## CHAPTER II.

The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiments, and heroic enterprize is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage while it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which, vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.

*Burke.*

**THE** events which we are endeavouring to record, occurred at a time when the glory, happiness and prosperity of France

had been "irrevocably" secured for the tenth or twelfth time by one of those periodical revolutions, in which it has been the pleasure of our Gallic neighbours to indulge since the year 1789. A citizen king,—the "*Roi Epicier*" of the middle classes,—occupied the throne, and might within a few years have been seen promenading the streets of Paris, with a tricoloured cockade in his hat, and an umbrella under his arm.

The "receptions" of the citizen monarch partook of the character of his government. The entrance to the Tuileries was by the same spacious court as in the time of the ancient kings of France. The same noble suites of rooms extended on every side, and if the apartment adorned with the portraits of the Marechals of France contained the likenesses of individuals, who would not probably in the olden time have risen to the same distinction, yet they were persons who had led the successful battalions of

their country at Marengo and Lodi, at Austerlitz and Jena, and as soldiers were well entitled to be placed by the side of Turenne and the Condé. But these obvious associations did not apply to the great mass assembled at the Tuileries. The ancient nobility stood haughtily aloof from one whom they considered a renegade, and the shopkeeper of the Rue de la Paix, and the Rue Vivienne, was slow to admit the questionable claims to superiority of the new men composing the "Noblesse de l'Empire." There was indeed a bright being in the royal group,\* born to excite as much enthusiasm and it may be more respect, than the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, but with this exception Burke would have looked in vain for the courtly circle,—the imaginative picture of the ancient regime he so eloquently described.

The court of Louis Philippe indeed exhibited many and striking evidences

\* The Duchess of Orleans.

that the manners and customs of bygone days had passed away. More than one hard featured dame might be seen in the presence chamber, whose birth and education it required no great penetration to trace to the Faubourg St. Antoine, and who in her own person exhibited a striking antithesis to the royal heroine of Burke.

C'est que la liberté n'est pas une Duchesse,  
Du noble Faubourg St Germain ;  
Une femme qu'un cri fait tomber en faiblesse,  
Qui met du blanc et du Carmin.\*

It would be doing injustice, however, to these *reunions*, to suppose that they exhibited any observable violation of the "convenances" of society. Frenchmen rarely commit such errors, and independently of that regard for appearances, which pervades every class of French society, there can be no doubt

\* Auguste Barbier.

that the first revolution has modified to a great extent the manners and habits of the middle class. That great convulsion reduced society to its elements, and out of the chaos produced by the wonderful fusion of ranks, interests and fortunes which then took place, new social combinations and new developments of character arose. The proud noble reduced to penury could no longer refuse his consent to a marriage between his daughter and the son of the rich and prosperous shopkeeper, and that union, while it snatched him from want, gave to the plebeian family, with which he allied himself, a new position, new manners, and aspirations which otherwise they would not have entertained. The modern middle class in France, therefore, if it fall far short of the refinement of the ancient nobility, is perhaps not less distinguishable in manners, appearance and conduct, from the ancient bour-



geoisie of Paris. When Lord Carlbrook's party, after a residence of a few weeks in Paris, visited the Tuileries, this new middle class was in the ascendant, and constituted the great majority of those who were present; but to the passing observer the flashy uniforms of the national guards, the really elegant appearance and manners of many of the officers of the regular army, and the display made by the several diplomatic bodies who appeared in more than ordinary numbers at this, a time of great political excitement, formed as brilliant a spectacle as the gay groups which surrounded the elder branch of the Bourbons in the plenitude of their power.

Constance regarded the scene with feelings of interest and pleasure, which rendered her totally unconscious of the numerous admiring glances that were cast upon herself. They were not unobserved, however, by Lord Marsdale,

and wishing it should appear that he enjoyed exclusively the favour of one who attracted such general admiration, he approached her with the view of entering into conversation. Constance, who was seated near Lady Carlbrook, and looking in an opposite direction, started involuntarily at the sound of his voice; and so evident was the reluctance with which she gave her attention to him, that he said with assumed warmth,—“I cannot but feel hurt at the unwillingness you manifest now, as on other occasions, to grant me a moment’s attention. I think, Constance,”—

“Miss Munroe,” she coldly interposed.

“Miss Munroe, then, since you so cruelly insist upon our still remaining on such distant terms,—I think, as I was about to say, that considering all the circumstances,”—

“To what circumstances may your lordship allude?” said Constance.

“Really, Miss Munroe,” said Lord

Marsdale, looking far from being at ease, "you surprise me. I thought it impossible that the object of our trip to Paris could admit of a doubt. Surely you must be aware of the wishes both our parents have lately formed?"

"Certainly, I am aware of those which my father has formed," said Constance, "though your words will admit of so many constructions, that I cannot feel certain whether our meaning is the same."

I sincerely beg your pardon, Miss Munroe. Perhaps before this I ought to have been more explicit. But I assure you that the error is entirely one of judgment. At once to remove all uncertainty, let me explain, that it having been suggested that—that our families should be more intimately connected, and a—a—ah understanding, moreover, the honour that was intended to be conferred on me, I readily accompanied my friends to Paris. No sooner,

however,—I must in candour tell you, Miss Munroe,—had I seen you, than I entertained the most sincere and ardent wish to gain if possible your esteem, and subsequently I trusted your affections, for I never saw one to whom I would more readily give my own. These were the circumstances to which I alluded, and as this explanation has been made in compliance, I may say, with what I supposed at the moment to be your wish, I hope you will not consider that I have been too hasty.”

“On the contrary,” said Constance, I am glad that you should have thus spoken, because the subject to which you allude being I know in contemplation, it gives me an opportunity of at once assuring you, that I never can comply with the wishes of my parent in this respect, and therefore I trust to your generosity in not again mentioning it. Do not, however, suppose that I am ungrateful for your good opinion, or

that I think lightly of the honour you intended me, for I am deeply sensible of both; but more than my friendship, which if worth the acceptance, shall most willingly be yours, I cannot give."

Lord Marsdale looked deeply mortified and rose from his chair, but before moving away he said,—“My only resource then will be to hope that you will at some future time be otherwise disposed.”

More company arrived till the spacious rooms were filled to overflowing. The copious light cast from the glittering chandeliers shed a bright lustre on the gay uniforms of the officers, and the gems of the ladies, while the undulating hum of conversation, fraught with many a lively jest, was on every side followed by merry though repressed laughter. Mr. Munroe derived little pleasure from this scene. He laboured under the great disadvantage of being one of the few persons in the room who were unable to speak the French language, and though

it had been his own wish to accompany the party, yet as his daughter was chaperoned by Lady Carlbrook, he was glad before the evening was far advanced, to make his escape, and wend his solitary way homewards.

In the meantime Dorothy sat at home in the drawing room, ruminating over a dreadful discovery she had that day made. Monsieur Alphonse, the great botanist, the Prince in disguise, was no other than Lady Harlborough's courier! This too she found out just after he had declared himself her devoted admirer! Oh! for words to picture her astonishment and indignation! She flew home, seized all the cosmetics and flowers and threw them out of window. She paced her room, she raved, and actually—we blush to write it,—she swore. Her excitement however had now a little subsided, and she was prepared to admit that he certainly was very handsome and very clever, but how could he be so

presumptuous? Was it any fault of his though that he had not been born a gentleman? On the contrary, it was very praiseworthy of him to have overcome the disadvantages of his position. Still his audacity!

Such were the thoughts that were alternately swaying the mind of Dorothy as she brooded over the discovery she had made, when the door opened, and Alphonse, after putting in his head and looking cautiously around, entered, and running across the room, threw himself at her feet.

"Pardon, pardon," he exclaimed in a pathetic tone, "or I will go and trow this miserable body into de Seine."

"Presumptuous man you have deceived me!" said Dorothy, as she drew back her chair.

"No Mademoiselle, I never deceive," said Alphonse, applying his hand to his waistcoat, and advancing towards her on his knees, "Mademoiselle did deceive

herself. She did tink from my words, dat I was more dan what I am. Could Alphonse find it in his heart to say to Mademoiselle 'I am only one courier?' He could not."

"Go ! go !" said Dorothy, sobbing.

"And drown myself?" asked Alphonse mournfully, as he sat down on his heels, for the hard floor made his knees ache. "Can Mademoiselle Dorotee send me to do such a ting as dat?"

"How awful!" cried Dorothy, still in tears.

"I beg Mademoiselle's pardon. It would be far more shocking to Alphonse to tink of living widout de smiles of Mademoiselle. Love is stronger dan anyting. Love has made Alphonse bold. Love has made him even tink of asking for de hand of de beautiful, charming, earned Dorotee. Will Mademoiselle make Alphonse one happy man or one corpse?"

"Oh Alphonse, you know you probe the weakness of my heart!"



"Dear kind Dorotee," said Alphonse supplicatingly, as he gently withdrew her yielding hand from before her face. "regard vid one look your devoted lover."

"Oh beautiful Alphonse!" said Dorothy, the pent up tenderness of years suddenly gushing forth. "My mind refuses longer to predominate over my feelings. I obey you with love and ecstasy. Never till this moment did I know the power of love. Never have my affections been called forth."

"Ah. Dat was de fault of dose Englis. Now you have come to France you will be appropriated."

"Appreciated, is the word," said Dorothy, with compassionate tenderness. "But I do not think it was the fault of my countrymen. My time was always too much occupied to allow me to think of what I then considered such frivolities. Besides you must not say aught, dear Alphonse, against the

English, for I am a staunch supporter of my country."

*Mourir pour la patrie!*" exclaimed Alphonse, with enthusiasm. "It is noble—it is excellent, to think of our country before ourselves. Therefore I will beg you, dear Dorotee," he continued, kissing her hand, "to make my country your country,—"

"And wherefore not live in my country?" said Dorothy, suddenly bridling up.

"Because where dere is one choice, it is well to choose de best, and France is de first nation in all de world."

"Say that again," said Dorothy, withdrawing her hand, and regarding Alphonse with offended majesty, "and I will aberuncate thy image from my heart."

"But my charming Dorotee, will find Paris more agreeable dan London. It is for dis reason only dat Alphonse say, live here."

"Shall I renounce the country," continued Dorothy, "that triumphed at Agincourt and Cressy, that won Waterloo and Trafalgar? whose great naval commander—immortal Nelson—chased the French fleet round the world and back again?"

"*Tiens! Je t'arracherai les cheveux dans un instant!*" said Alphonse, with an expression that savoured little of love. "I beg ten thousand pardon for speaking in French. I did say to myself—how well you do speak."

"It is the result of the attention I have paid to literature and science," said Dorothy, conciliated by this compliment. "But what," she continued, resuming a tender look, "what have I to do with such things now. Oh, Alphonse, I will endeavour to forget the knowledge I have treasured up; and the attention I loved to bestow upon my books shall now be devoted wholly to you."

"Her Alphonse will show dat he can love as much in return, and when she has made him de happiest of men, she shall not ask for anything she wants."

The equivocal nature of this remark, apparently made Dorothy a little uneasy, but recovering her composure, she said, "Oh, Alphonse! I look forward with anxiety to the time when I shall be emancipated from this thralldom. What think you of my relatives invariably leaving me behind when they proceed on their circumforaneous tours?"

"*Par-bleu*. Dat is dreadful!" said Alphonse, catching from the tone of Dorothy's voice that there was something to commiserate.

"Yes indeed," continued Dorothy, "and the frivolous excuse is, that their party is so numerous. As if *I* was ever *de trop*!"

"Ah!" said Alphonse, in a deep bass voice, "dat supposition is ridiculous. But, charming Dorotee, de hours dey

are away we will pass in love and happiness."

"We will," said Dorothy, leaning forward in her chair, till her scanty ringlets tickled the nose of her admirer, which testified its disapprobation by a sneeze. "That is ample compensation. Oh, Alphonse! will you always love me?"

"For ever!" replied Alphonse, throwing his arms around Dorothy, and clasping her to his breast.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I scarcely expected such foolery as this," said Mr. Munroe, who had entered the room without being perceived.

Dorothy gave an hysterical scream, and rushed from the room, but Alphonse was apparently rooted to the spot by his knees, for he remained without moving in the same posture.

Mr. Munroe, having shut the door, stepped up to Alphonse and said, "Who the devil may you be?"

"I," said Alphonse, rising slowly to his feet, "am Miss Dorotee's devoted admirer."

"And what else, fool?"

"I hope Monsieur does not intend to insult me," said Alphonse, striving hard to look indignant.

"No, idiot. I want to know who you are. What is your name? Do you belong to the hotel?"

"No, Monsieur," said Alphonse, drawing himself up with dignity, "I am Lady Harlborough's travelling companion."

"Her courier I suppose you mean to say?"

Alphonse bowed an affirmative.

"And what is your price? What do you require never to show your face here again, and remain silent about what has taken place?"

"Ah, Monsieur," said Alphonse, pricking up his ears, "you cannot deal lightly wid de affections."

"Well, I can tell you this, that Miss

Dorothy Munroe has not a single sixpence of her own."

"Ah?" exclaimed Alphonse, interrogatively.

"Not a sixpence," said Mr. Munroe. "And here," he continued, opening a desk and tendering a bank note, "here is a hundred pounds. Be gone, and at the end of three years, provided I hear nothing more of this matter, you shall receive a similar sum."

"Since Monsieur does so command, I must submit," said Alphonse, putting the note into his pocket. "I now wish Monsieur very good evening."

Mr. Munroe pointed to the door, and Alphonse, with a great many bows, left the room. As soon as he was gone, Mr. Munroe went to his sister, and told her word for word what had happened. Her shame and mortification were so great, that he refrained from any reproach, but advised her to go back to Ulvacombe, a proposition that she

readily agreed to. The next morning, therefore, at an early hour, she quitted Paris, to the infinite relief of her brother, who contrived a sufficient excuse for her sudden departure.

There was much that Mr. Munroe disliked in the intercourse between himself and his aristocratic acquaintances. Independently of their mere nominal claims to superiority, he found in Lord Carlbrook a man of superior abilities and an accomplished scholar, who was able without an effort to exact that deference which he sought for in vain. To Mr. Munroe, who, though in a small sphere of action, had been accustomed to dictate to those around him, this was a mortification scarcely compensated for by the advantages which he persuaded himself were to be the result of his daughter's marriage with Lord Marsdale. He nevertheless deluded himself into the belief that when the marriage should have



taken place, this cause of annoyance would disappear, and that he would then be able to assert that equality with his noble kinsfolk which was at present tacitly denied him. It was under the influence of these feelings, that, a few days after Dorothy's departure, he addressed Lord Carlbrook on the subject, and sought to convey his wish that the ceremony should be speedily celebrated.

"If I understand you rightly," said Lord Carlbrook, when Mr. Munroe after a great deal of circumlocution had partially explained his meaning, "it is your opinion that the marriage we have for some time had in contemplation, should not longer be delayed. But, unfortunately, I cannot agree with you, for I have good reasons to believe that one of the parties, at least, is not prepared to acquiesce in such an arrangement."

"I must really beg to differ from your Lordship on that point," said Mr.

Munroe. "I will venture to say that no impediment will be offered by either party, for your son spoke to me the other day on the subject, and I am happy to say pleaded his attachment to my daughter, as a reason why I should allow the ceremony to take place on our return to England."

Lord Carlbrook paused, looked on the ground for a minute, and then with evident reluctance said, "It was not of my son that I spoke."

"I am glad to hear your lordship say so," continued Mr. Munroe, "because that at once removes every difficulty. My daughter of course conforms to the advice and wishes of her parent."

"It may be so. I am not prepared to say how far the desire to conform to your wishes may influence her, but at present such a step would be very far from her own inclination, and I will avow to you, notwithstanding the temporary mortification the circumstance

caused me, that the very day my son conferred with you, Miss Munroe went on her knees to Lady Carlbrook, and in tears begged her to use all her influence to break off the match."

"She did?" exclaimed Mr. Munroe with vehemence; but suddenly checking himself, he added in a tone which was meant to be compassionate, "Silly girl! she scarcely knows her own mind. Ah, my lord, there is little cause for wonder. Some transient thought or feeling doubtless prompted this ebullition, and it would be hard indeed if we were to allow such an occurrence to interfere with her settlement in life."

"If it were only some passing thought by which she was actuated," said Lord Carlbrook, "I shall rejoice, for I confess that I have a strong feeling of regard for Miss Munroe. At the same time I think you will agree with me, that it would be far better to allow the matter to drop for the present. At

the expiration of another year, during which time you might allow Miss Munroe to reside in the country, we shall be better able to judge of the correctness of your present impressions. I will merely add, that these are Lady Carlbrook's suggestions, and that in the event of their meeting with your approval, we shall not deem it necessary to make my son acquainted with what has transpired."

Mr. Munroe could but ill conceal his vexation at hearing these words, but he felt that both Lord and Lady Carlbrook's decision was taken, and moreover fully appreciated the threat in Lord Carlbrook's latter observation, of acquainting his son with what had taken place, unless he acquiesced in their proposition. He therefore instantly expressed approbation of the plan, and in conformity with it, his intention of quitting Paris in the course of the week.

All parties felt relieved when the day for quitting Paris arrived, for after the explanation between Lord Carlbrook and Mr. Munroe, their intercourse became constrained and irksome. Constance, however, though delighted at the prospect of being freed from the society of Lord Marsdale, could not without a pang part from Lady Clara, to whom she had become much attached. The regret was mutual, and when they had to bid each other adieu, tears and promises to write were mingled with many a kindly wish for each other's happiness and welfare.

CHAPTER III.

In vain he strove to fly the scene,  
And breath beyond that time ;  
Tormented memory glated between ;  
Immortal seemed his crime.

*Montgomery.*

NEARLY a year elapsed after the  
disastrous duel in India, before Merry-  
weather again set foot in England, and

the spring was tolerably far advanced when accompanied by his uncle, he arrived in London. Mr. Ponsonby had been unremitting in his exertions to rally him, and our hero probably owed it to his excellent relative's care, that he did not become the inmate of a madhouse. It was only through judicious management, that he was saved from so dreadful a fate, but his improved appearance now showed that time was by degrees restoring his vigour of mind, and silencing those acute pangs of remorse, which at first so nearly effected the overthrow of his reason. Plans for the future now frequently occupied his thoughts, and the past with all its gloomy retrospects began to fade away as a vision before the gaze of the awakened slumberer. But there was one subject more than any other to which his thoughts recurred, and one that was perhaps best calculated to restore a healthy tone to his mind. He frequently conjured up the image of his

cousin, and with it those fascinating ways and womanly virtues which had first won his admiration and subsequently his love. Though his mind had been plunged into a morbid state by his misfortune, and almost every subject which attracted his attention was clothed in dark and forbidding colours, yet from the contemplation of this he could always derive consolation.—Here was an oasis where his wearied spirit could find relief. Nor was his love for his cousin of an interested nature. It was neither vehement nor impetuous, but was peculiar to men of his character, whose affections are with difficulty won, and whose feelings have never been blunted by an indiscriminate intercourse with the world. It was calm, deep, and unconquerable by time, and if in India change of scene, and constant occupation had diverted his mind from this ruling passion, it was now revived with all its wonted vigour, and to possess himself of her hand, once more became



his sole aim and object. Still these brighter thoughts were far from being unalloyed. He endeavoured to conjecture what would be the impression produced upon her by the unfortunate occurrence in India, and at such moments he felt with pain that she would probably have been taught to believe accounts of the transaction either totally incorrect, or so distorted, as to place him in a most guilty light. Nevertheless, he still hoped that love,—unconquerable love, would rise victorious over every other consideration, and unquenched even by the admission that he was partly to blame, burn perhaps the brighter from a generous conviction, that if he had erred, he must also have deeply suffered.

But if Merryweather's anxiety had been great before arriving in England, it now increased tenfold, and as the time approached which was to determine the correctness of the various surmises that

had so long occupied his thoughts, he became less sanguine and more distrustful of the arguments with which he had buoyed up his hopes. So impatient was he after a few days' sojourn in Town, to ascertain in what light he was viewed at Ulvacombe, that he could scarcely refrain from proceeding there, but Mr. Ponsonby, who was aware of the *dénouement* which preceded his nephew's departure from that place on a former occasion, dissuaded him from such a step, though he offered to see Mr. Munroe himself, and if possible prepare the way for a visit from Merryweather. This was gratefully accepted by the latter, and Mr Ponsonby immediately left Town for Devonshire.

No sooner was Merryweather left alone than he first counted the hours that must elapse before he could hear from his uncle, and then endeavoured to await with patience the time that must necessarily intervene before he could receive a

letter. That this was a task beyond his power, his eccentric movements quickly testified. In fact, he soon became the subject of remark in the hotel where he was staying, and apprehensions, apparently not without ground, were entertained of his complete sanity. Unable to endure inaction, he would at one time hurry out as if time were matter of life and death to him, and half an hour afterwards return sauntering back till he arrived in his own room, which he would pace up and down for hours. Dinner was ordered and sent away untouched, and then in the hope of passing as many hours as possible in forgetfulness, he would betake himself to bed, but rise the next morning with every evidence of having passed a sleepless night.

Three days at length crawled past. The postman on his usual rounds appeared at the door, and Merryweather, who was in waiting for him, instantly said, "Any letters for me?"

"What name, sir?"

"Merryweather."

"No, sir, none."

"None? are you quite sure. You may have made a mistake. Pray look again?"

"Oh, certainly sir," said the man, proceeding to untie a packet of letters that he held in his hand. "No, sir," he continued, after having looked carefully over them, "not to day." But seeing how distressed Merryweather was at the information, he added good-naturedly, "I suppose I must bring it along with me to morrow when I come."

Notwithstanding that Merryweather felt the extravagance of admitting that the person who thus addressed him had it in his power to create the numerous missives, which he held in his hand, yet the suggestion served for the time to console him, and he returned into the house resolved not

to give way to any further despondency of feeling. But time would not on this account hurry his movements. The regular routine in an hotel had to be gone through. Men in black clothes and white neckcloths, who appeared to be gifted with perpetual motion, passed an innumerable number of times before his eyes. Visitors arrived and departed. Luggage was carried up and down stairs. Old gentlemen came to grumble, and young ones to strut about and persecute the waiters; till the noise and bustle again died away, and bars and bolts were drawn, and night put an end to the toil. All these things glanced in succession before him. Light gave place to darkness, and darkness again in its turn to the morning light. Then the bustle of the previous day revived, and the postman on his diurnal tour made his reappearance at the hotel. But a disappointment awaited Merryweather,

similar to that which he had experienced on the previous day, and it was not till the following morning that any letters for him arrived. Two were then placed in his hands, the handwriting on each of which he instantly recognized. One was from Mr. Ponsonby and the other from Mr. Munroe. The latter he tore open and read as follows.

“Sir,

“Till almost the moment at which I am writing, Mr. Ponsonby’s visit, which I cannot now doubt you are aware of, has given me the most unqualified pleasure. But the attempt he has just made to vindicate your character, must ever make me regret that I bade him welcome to my house. My own opinion of your recent fearful crime, *an opinion in which my daughter fully concurs*, is, that a more cruel, heartless action was never committed, and the details which have reached me, have

shocked me more than anything it was ever my lot to hear.

I have seen a regiment leave its quarters with band playing, colours flying, and every individual of which it was composed elated with high and gallant hopes. A few months afterwards I have read of that regiment being mercilessly cut to pieces by overwhelming numbers, in some mountain pass, where discipline and courage were of no avail. I have known men personally, who have met death at the treacherous hands of sworn allies, while, relying upon their honour, they were negotiating matters connected with their respective governments. But I can recall no instance in which my sympathy for the victim, and my indignation at the slayer, have been more thoroughly roused than in the present case. My door is for ever shut against you, but it shall nevertheless be my sincere hope that the Almighty may so open your eyes, that you may see the

full extent of your crime, and may you pray for the intercession of that great Mediator, who died for the *worst of criminals*.

“Your’s faithfully,

“R. MUNROE.”

For some minutes Merryweather’s indignation silenced the painful feelings which this communication immediately afterwards gave rise to, and it was with considerable gratification that he found on opening Mr. Ponsonby’s letter that he had in no very measured terms condemned Mr. Munroe’s proceedings. As soon, however, as his excitement had a little subsided, and he began to reperuse the former epistle, his gaze was quickly rivetted to the words, “*an opinion in which my daughter fully concurs.*” To him it was a sentence full of portentous meaning. It convinced him that Mr. Munroe had taken advantage of the fatal accident, which in his letter he charac-



terized as a "cruel and heartless action," to prejudice the mind of his young cousin against him. But the chief subject of regret to him was the thought that she possibly gave credence to these calumnies, and the flush on his brow was as much occasioned by the momentary anger that this supposition awoke, as by the other agitating thoughts which at that moment occupied his mind. When he considered, however, if such was the case, with what ease the fatal transaction in which he had been involved might be misrepresented, and what innumerable arguments might be urged, all bearing phases as deceptive as the sample contained in Mr. Munroe's letter, he instantly resolved to forgive what at first appeared to him conduct so foreign from the opinion he had formed of her character. But how was he to remove the false impressions she might be under, and reinstate himself in her good opinion? Could he but effect this and

show that he was not unworthy of her love, he felt that he could remain comparatively satisfied, though it were purchased with the hard condition of never seeing her again. But to do so was at present beyond his power, as it would of course be impossible to obtain an interview, and he was obliged reluctantly to own that his only resource was to trust to time,—the certain vindicator of the calumniated, and the no less infallible condemner of him who accuses falsely.

The next day, Mr. Ponsonby arrived in town and purposely disguising his own feelings, spoke so cheerfully of ultimately removing every unfavourable impression from the mind of his niece, that Merryweather was inspired with fresh hopes, and he now readily turned his attention to a subject which required immediate consideration. On their first arrival in England letters had been received from India, stating that the native, Bargee

Gopall, had returned to Bombay shortly after they had taken their departure, the heavy rains having greatly retarded his journey. He was believed to have brought the box of papers with him but it appeared that he steadily persisted in refusing to answer a single question until he saw either Merryweather, or his uncle. Under these circumstances it was agreed, since Mr. Ponsonby's leave of absence had now nearly expired, that he should return to Bombay, for the double purpose of making such arrangements as would enable him finally to settle in England, and of procuring the documents at present supposed to be in Bargee Gopall's possession.

"Before I go, however," said Mr. Ponsonby, after the discussion of their affairs had resulted in this arrangement, "I should like very much to see if it is likely that Mrs. Mackintosh could be brought to terms in case of a com-

promise being deemed advisable when we are in possession of the papers, for after all they may not be conclusive."

"We can call at her house in Eaton Place, if you like," said Merryweather.

Mr. Ponsonby looked for a few moments undecided at this proposal, and as he walked up and down the room in an evident state of excitement, jerked out the following detached sentences. "Her house? No such thing. Bought with other people's money! Hypocrisy and cant. Visit her? Well, yes," he resumed as he stopped opposite his nephew; "we will go and see if she has any conscience left."

"You will find it rather a convenient one, I daresay," said Merryweather, as he rose and prepared to depart with his uncle.

Mrs. Mackintosh was at home, and upon entering her drawing room they found her seated at a table covered with

reports of missions to all parts of the world, while on these again were deposited several sums of money, varying in amount according to the supposed claims of the intended donees.

"I will not apologize," she said, rising to receive her visitors, "for the little disorder you perceive here, for—but who do I see? Ah! my young friend!"

"You are surprised to see me Mrs. Mackintosh," said Merryweather, to whom this was addressed. "If my presence is not agreeable, perhaps you will allow me to introduce my uncle and retire."

"Oh no, I am glad that you have come. The moment may be propitious, and perhaps I may be able to do good, for the heart is softer under affliction, and more open to religious impressions. I must, however," she added, assuming a more emphatic tone, "be bold and shrink not, or I should not be a faithful servant, and you may remember, that on a former

occasion I did not allow any false delicacy to prevent my doing so. The calamity which I warned you was perhaps close at hand has overtaken you indeed ! and yet these little books—these gentle alteratives, would have probably prevented such sad results. The benefit to be derived from them has been beautifully expressed by Mr. Wiggles, the composer of many stirring hymns. He wrote them one day after some very comforting discourse, on the fly leaf of ‘The Invisible Breastplate.’”

“Would you guard against temptation ?  
 Here’s some armour quite complete ;  
 Put it on with meditation,  
 And your evil thoughts defeat.”

I may here remark that it was exceedingly honourable in Mr. Wiggles thus to eulogise the work in question, because its author and himself are considered, by the Worldly, to be literary rivals, though, alas ! they only attempt to rival

one another in brotherly love, and in promoting the good of their fellow creatures. But to return to our subject," she continued, addressing Mr. Ponsonby, "the dreadful occurrence itself was, I understand, quite an accident?"

"Quite so," replied Mr. Ponsonby, with a look expressive of his intention to listen patiently to whatever might be forthcoming.

"I feel that to be a mercy. But still, so sad an event could not have occurred without a breach of discipline."

"In a military point of view, do you mean?" asked Mr. Ponsonby.

"That may also be the case. But I spoke of the inward discipline by means of which Mr. Leatherlung, with his characteristic comprehensiveness, bids us regulate our actions. You have probably never heard him preach? He grapples with his subject with gigantic effect, and such is his logical power, that all argument falls to the

ground the moment he opens his mouth. So irresistably, indeed, have I heard him assail those whose opinions do not coincide with his own, that the whole congregation has gone home deeply thankful that the sermon did not probably apply to any one present. Even on ordinary occasions we are obliged to provide ourselves with sal-volatile and other restoratives, but when he puts forth all his energies, tears and even fainting are the unavoidable consequences. Yes. We are obliged to find relief for our over-wrought feelings, so completely does he take our hearts by storm. It is this peculiar gift which induces me to think our young friend would reap benefit from attending his evening lectures, particularly as he would also derive the additional advantage of becoming acquainted with many devout members of the Flock, to whom I should have much pleasure in introducing him."



"Well, Frank," said Mr. Ponsonby, "what do you think of that offer?"

"I think," replied Merryweather thoughtfully, "that were I to become acquainted with such people, who I have no doubt are in their way very sincere, I should recommend their soliciting some competent person to lecture on the simple but expressive words,—'Know thyself.'"

"I do not remember any such text?" said Mrs. Mackintosh, inquiringly.

"It is not in the Bible," replied Merryweather.

"Then only an atheist would presume to lecture upon it. But I cannot wonder, my dear young friend, that you should have other thoughts than appertain unto a due and proper consideration of your present state, and it is for this reason that I am endeavouring to impress upon you the necessity of having recourse to that soul-restoring man, Mr. Leatherlungs,

round whose head a halo looms. He would soon correct whatever is wrong in your system; and who knows but what you might then voluntarily embrace the pleasing task of reforming others! I have little doubt that should your inclinations hereafter tend that way, my recommendation would be sufficient to get you employed on a mission to the west coast of Africa, or to any other part of the world that presents an equally inviting field for your exertions."

"Timbuctoo, for instance," said Mr. Ponsonby, gravely. "I believe that is in the interior, and a delightful spot, though quite as unhealthy as the coast. But then there would be this advantage, Frank, that as you would not probably return, the danger of your ever becoming troublesome to those who have reason to fear you would be considerably lessened."

"Does my young friend harbour in his breast other than charitable feelings

towards any person alive? Oh! let him pluck them forth!"

"They are not, I daresay, vindictive ones," said Mr. Ponsonby, "but I doubt as little that they are such as it is reasonable to suppose any one would entertain under a sense of wrong."

"You surprise me," said Mrs. Mackintosh, beginning to look alarmed.

"There is scarcely any cause for surprise either. My nephew, now that he has turned his attention to these things, feels it very hard that one, not even a relation, should be in possession of his father's property. He thinks that such an arrangement could never have been contemplated, and I must say, that from my knowledge of my brother's character, I am decidedly of the same opinion. It was to urge this in a friendly manner that we are here to-day."

Mrs. Mackintosh, who had turned quite pale at the commencement of this address, recovered her composure as she

heard the last sentence, and replied—  
“Alas! We must, I suppose, sometimes allot a little of our attention to these matters of business, though I so seldom allow my thoughts to dwell upon them, that I have no doubt a conference with my solicitor on the subject would be far more satisfactory than with me.”

“Perhaps, also,” said Mr. Ponsonby, with significance, “it would be more satisfactory if my nephew were to engage the services of another gentleman in the same profession to conduct the conference on his part.”

“You grieve as well as surprise me,” said Mrs. Mackintosh, holding a handkerchief before her eyes.

“It was merely a *suggestion*,” said Mr. Ponsonby. “There may be no necessity for having recourse to such extreme measures.”

“What is it that you wish to learn?” said Mrs. Mackintosh from behind her handkerchief.

"There *is* something to learn then?" said Mr. Ponsonby, with a quick turn of his head.

"Learn? How? What?"

"Oh! Nothing! But we were not talking at the time of making any discovery, and therefore I was only seeking to understand your question. No. I started by saying we were of opinion that my brother had made some unaccountable mistake when disposing of his property, and I will now proceed to tell you what we further think on the subject, and then leave it to your consideration. We think then, that a sense of justice should incline you to give up all claim to the property of which you are at present in possession, and restore it to my nephew, who has manifestly the more legitimate right to it; and I think, in case of your so acting, that my nephew would very likely be induced to secure to you during

your life one half of the income which it yields."

Mrs. Mackintosh looked up with doubt and anxiety as she heard these words, and appeared to be on the point of consenting, but whether from distrust, or a feeling of inability to act without first consulting Captain Blakeney, she replied—"These subjects really are beyond me. I must indeed refer you to my solicitor."

This reply was decisive, and Mr. Ponsonby instantly rose, and having bid a formal farewell to Mrs. Mackintosh, departed with his nephew.

After they had left the house, he said, "My opinion is now confirmed that there has been foul play in this business. I sincerely trust that those papers, which are at present with Barjee Gopall, may throw some light upon the matter. I shall certainly start by the next mail, for I am quite impatient to sift it."

This decision of Mr. Ponsonby's was

soon after carried into effect, and thus the two relatives were obliged to part. They both felt it to be a great trial, for their intercourse, which had been much more that of friends of the same age than of persons unequally matched in years, had been so uninterrupted, and they had become so habituated to each others society since they left India, that they could scarcely reconcile themselves to the change. There were no means however of averting the separation, and Merryweather was soon left in Town with the desolate feeling of having parted from his best friend.

## CHAPTER IV.

This ilke worthy Knighte hadde been also  
Somtime with the Lord of Palatie,  
Agen another hethen in Turkie ;  
And evermore he hadde a sovereigne pris.  
*Chaucer.*

A FEW days had elapsed since Mr. Ponsonby's departure for India, when one morning Merryweather observed from a window in the front of the hotel,



a couple of cabs drive up to the door, laden with luggage of a most heterogeneous description. But what was his astonishment when out of one sprang Lieutenant Pinkem! who instantly began giving directions for his "kit" to be conveyed within. As soon as he had a little recovered his surprise he hastened down stairs to see his brother officer, who, was so busily engaged in issuing orders that he did not at first perceive Merryweather's approach.

"Ah, my dear fellow!" he said, turning round as soon as he heard Merryweather call him by name, "Have you come to light again? Never was more delighted in my life, than in meeting you here. But just let me make two or three arrangements," he continued, after shaking Merryweather cordially by the hand, "and then I'll come up stairs with you. Ho! You porters! take care how you carry that packing case."

"Is there anything particularly fragile in it?" asked Merryweather.

"Yes. All the workboxes, fans, and things of that sort, which the Rajah of Trincomolipatam, or some such name, gave me in token of his perpetual friendship,—a blessing on his head for the act. But where's the landlord?"

"Here, sir," replied the proprietor of the hotel, stepping forward in a very respectful manner, for on seeing the number of chattels which were being brought into his house, and hearing his guest talk familiarly of Indian Rajahs, he instantly associated him with at least a crore of rupees, to say nothing of pagodas and gold mohurs.

"Have you any good rooms disengaged?" said Pinkem.

"They have already gone to prepare some of the best we have for you, sir."

"Ah! that's right, I may remain here a month or two. And—and if I ever want anything out of the way, I'll let you know."

The landlord made a most humble obeisance, accompanied with a great many thanks for the condescension evinced by his guest, which Pinkem graciously acknowledged by informing him that he had been recommended to his house by a great many friends, and that he was happy to say he saw no reason to suppose that their representations had been exaggerated.

"Come," said Pinkem to Merryweather, after this explanation, "let us betake ourselves to your rooms, as mine are not ready yet."

This having been willingly assented to, they proceeded upstairs together, when, having entered the apartment, Pinkem continued—

"And now Merryweather, how do you get on? Why man, you look thin and out of sorts."

"I am better than I have been though since,—since,"—

"Since leaving India," suggested

Pinkem, who saw what was passing in Merryweather's mind. "Ah, it wont do to rake up bygones. By the way when are you going to join again, Merryweather? your leave must be nearly up?"

"Within a fortnight, I believe," said Merryweather, "but I have good reasons for still being in England, and I have therefore made up my mind to leave the army, and have sent in my resignation."

"The deuce you have!"

"Yes. Though I scarcely understand your surprise, for I conclude you have done so to, and if one may judge from appearances, in consequence of some sudden accession of fortune for which doubtless I ought to congratulate you."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! You are wrong in both your suppositions, for I am only home on leave, and I do assure you that my sole piece of good fortune since seeing you, with the exception of the Rajah, has been to obtain my

company. So now I am Captain, instead of Lieutenant Pinkem; but still very much at your service."

"Then by what wonderful combination of circumstances is it that you are here at all; and what do you mean by your exception in favour of the Rajah? I thought there were certain reasons which rendered it impossible for you to leave Bombay?"

"True, my dear fellow; but then the Rajah, my friend the Rajah,—the exception as you very properly term him,—with whom, you may remember, I once went out shooting when you were with us,—opened his royal purse strings and afforded me his generous aid."

"The acceptance of which, I suppose you are aware," said Merryweather, "might have involved you in considerable trouble. Even to the extent, I apprehend, of being dismissed the service."

"And if in action," replied Pinkem, with the greatest composure, "a bullet should come spinning through your head, or you should be accommodated with a few inches of cold steel in the abdomen, you get dismissed the service, as you term it, in an equally summary manner. But I was wrong. There was what the lawyers call a consideration, I believe—a mutual compact or agreement, so that you see there were no gifts."

"What were they—loans?" asked Merryweather, smiling.

"No, nor loans. Why, now, I'll tell you how it happened. I frequently played at chess in the presence of the Rajah with some of the long-bearded gentlemen of his court. His black highness condescended to take great interest in these games, and used frequently to lay heavy wagers on the issue. In consequence I found the pursuit a very profitable one.

"Then you must surely play remarkably well at chess?" said Merryweather.

"Nothing out of the common," replied Pinkem, "nor was any great science required, for they were but indifferent players. Indeed, their style of playing partakes very much of their character. It is wily and careful, but totally devoid of enterprise. They never dream of cancelling an attack upon their position by a counter attack on that of their adversary, and though they certainly defend themselves with great ingenuity and foresight, yet, as they are always intent upon rendering their own position unassailable before they venture on the initiative, they find their strength crumble away till defeat is inevitable. To compare great things with small," continued Pinkem, "I have always considered that these characteristics must ever render the Asiatic contemptible as a foe. With the exception of Hyder Ali, who really

understood how best to employ the means at his disposal, we have never had an opponent in India who did not place more reliance upon his resources for defence than his means of attack—upon the number more than upon the efficiency of his men—upon their proximity to stone walls and strong positions, rather than upon celerity of movement and that harassing mode of warfare for which they are so peculiarly adapted. They never seem to know wherein their real strength consists. However, to return to our subject, I do not mean to say that I was never beaten. A chess board is but a small space on which to expend all the efforts of the mind, and those who have thus given up their entire attention to the subject will of course defeat a mere amateur; and there at last came to the Rajah's court a long-headed old moolah, for whom I at once saw I was no match, so I gave up playing."



"Did you ever have a contest with the Rajah himself?" asked Merryweather.

"No. Either it was beneath his dignity, or he could not play well enough. I am inclined however to think the latter was the real cause, for he was really a most agreeable sort of fellow for an Indian potentate, and quite European in many of his tastes and feelings. I frequently had long conversations with him upon our mode of life in England, and used to explain to him as well as I could all the various inventions of late years, to which he invariably paid great attention. But I shall never forget his look of amazement when I told him that by the help of steam we travelled at the rate of forty or fifty miles an hour, from one end of the country to the other."

"What did he say?" asked Merryweather.

"Nothing to me; but turning to

his vizier, he continued in a pleasant sort of way, "*yih burra juth hai*," though what that may mean, I confess I do not know."

"He was simply calling your veracity in question," replied Merryweather, laughing, "and that too in a very unsophisticated manner."

"The deuce he was!" exclaimed Pinkem. "Why he must have done so twice during that interview then, for I remember that he made the very same observation when I told him that our horses—which he contended could be of no use to us if we were able to employ steam in the way I had mentioned—were larger than the Arabian, and frequently stood upwards of sixteen hands high."

"I can scarcely wonder at his incredulity," replied Merryweather, "for their term *hath*, though signifying hand, yet when applied to measurement, means not only the hand but the arm also,

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as far as the elbow, so that you gave him to understand that our horses were considerably taller than his largest elephant. The two pieces of information combined must have impressed him with the idea that you were certainly in a romancing mood on that occasion."

"Ah, now the riddle is out and this accounts for his surprise."

"Well, I thought," said Merryweather, "that the Indian Rajah with a bagful of money, into which he is expected constantly to dip his hand, was a specimen of the *genus homo* which had long become extinct. However you seem to have ferreted out what must certainly be the last man of his class, with considerable skill. But I remember," he continued, laughing, "that it was always said of you, Pinkem, as of other great men, that in an emergency your resources were unbounded, yet I scarcely understand how you mean to carry on the war now?"

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"Hush. Not so loud, my dear fellow, not so loud. The outer portion of that door may have an ear against it. You see," continued Pinkem, speaking in a low tone and very seriously, "I am so horribly poor, that I really cannot afford to live economically. You stare, but I assure you that it is the fact. Why if I was well off I could dispense with appearances. Now, they are among the absolute necessities of life."

"For my part I can never agree with your policy," said Merryweather. "It is a bubble that will soon burst, and but delays the evil day for a very short time. I say nothing either of the abstract propriety of wilfully running into debt."

"I understand you," said Pinkem, glancing for a moment angrily at Merryweather. "But who shall say that I am doing so?" And then resuming his usual jovial manner, he continued—"I have calculated my expenses to a rupee.

So long as my pagodas last, I am as independent as the wealthiest man in the land, and when they are gone, why I shall return to my regiment and seek promotion in the legitimate walk of my profession. But I have not told you my secret yet. Why man, I have staked the whole of the Rajah's funds on the cast of a die, and I mean to sink or swim as it may turn up."

"How do you mean?" asked Merryweather, with some interest.

"I will tell you.—As I came from India by the overland route, I made up my mind to visit Paris, and having previously to starting expressed my intention of doing so, our Colonel gave me a letter of introduction to old Lady Harlborough, who had resided there for some years, and to whom he stood godfather"—

"Why he is comparatively a young man!" said Merryweather, with surprise.

"Ah, true. I meant to say, what is

the same thing or very nearly so, she stood godmother to him. Well, I called upon her, and there I saw, oh Heavens! the prettiest little fairy in creation. Only sixteen, and an heiress! so you may suppose I did not hide my light under a bushel.

"Seldom that you think that necessary," said Merryweather, laughing, "and very properly too. In the present instance, what was the result of your gallantry? For I suppose Romeo would suffer by comparison with you."

"You shall judge for yourself. We met constantly. I, of course, improved those occasions to the utmost of my poor powers, and I believe with some success, for when I went to wish her adieu, she told me in the prettiest manner that she should never again believe what men said, if I did not manage to see her when she returned to England; whereupon I made the most fervent promises, and sealed them by a token which I trust will often be repeated."

"And what may be the name of your fair inamorata?" asked Merryweather.

"Lady Clara Chalmers, the daughter of Lord Carlbrook."

"And you surely do not mean to say that you expect to ingratiate yourself into the good graces of the family with the same success as attended you with the Lady Clara?"

"I wish to Heavens, Merryweather," said Pinkem, "that you would not be so liberal with your cold water. Of course I don't expect anything, or wish anything, or hope anything, and this is the reason why I am about to risk nothing but the Rajah's pagodas, and it may be," he added more seriously "my position, independence and future prospects."

"I am afraid," said Merryweather, after a pause, "that you will call me a pessimist, but suppose now that all your plans should fail, which I must confess appears to me almost a certainty,

would any relations assist you in case of necessity, and in the event of the Rajah's fund becoming exhausted?"

"Whether they would or not will never be put to the test, for I promise you that Harry Pinkem shall become as black as the niggers we left behind us in India before he applies to them. And I'll tell you why. Snobs—for my vocabulary will not furnish me with a more appropriate term,—Snobs, will sometimes, you know, creep into the best regulated families. Such has been the case with the distinguished family of the Pinkems, who can boast of a genealogy that is traceable, I have heard it said, to Egbert, the first king of England, if he was the first king, which I do not vouch for. When less experienced, I was once foolish enough, being hard pressed, to apply to one of these interlopers for assistance, and I have regretted doing so but once,—ever since. The assistance was given, but in such



an offensive manner, that they had a hundred times better have refused it. In my opinion, the course pursued under such circumstances, illustrates in a very striking manner, the essential difference between a gentleman and one of their class. The former, either tells you frankly and sincerely that he is unable to assist you, or says, 'Well old fellow you've done rather a foolish thing, but it can't be helped now,' or something to that effect, and gives you the relief you require in a way which enhances the favour. The latter writes you a long letter about the iniquity of your ways, reminds you of the sufferings and patience of Job, quotes passages from scripture to show you that you are indubitably going to the devil, and exhorts you to repentance and amendment, when, having scribbled as much nonsense as he can get into two sheets of paper, finishes at last, either with a refusal, or by acceding

to your request, with so many reservations and to so limited an extent, as to render his compliance comparatively valueless, independently of the disgust he so effectually contrives to excite."

"A sort of letter," said Merryweather, laughing, "that would do very well in place of the sermon you recommend always to be read with the soda water on the morning after a carousal. To you I should think it would be invaluable."

"It would be of no service now at all events," said Pinkem, "for I fear that I shall never again be in that frame of mind necessary for the full appreciation of its moral precepts. In other words, I have turned over a new leaf and given up all bad habits. I remember I used to laugh at people being in love, but I made a great mistake. It changes a man wonderfully for the better. By the way," continued

Pinkem, after a pause, "Lady Harlborough has asked me to call upon her grandson, Lady Clara's youngest brother, with a very handsome present which she entrusted to my care. He has just obtained a commission in the guards, and I must find out to day where he lives."

"I think," said Merryweather, "that I can assist you there, for I know Captain Blakeney, who is very likely to be acquainted with some of his brother officers, and if you like, we will go and call upon him."

"The very thing. I will just have a bath and dress, and then we will start."

So saying Pinkem left the room, and after an absence of about an hour, returned with every sign of travelling removed, to the great improvement of the outward man, and informed Merryweather, that he was ready to accompany him. They then quitted the hotel

together and arrived at the lodgings of Captain Blakeney at about three o'clock. Upon being admitted into the room where he was seated, they saw upon the table the remains of a most *recherche* breakfast, such as the most devoted disciple of Epicurus could have found no fault with, and which had evidently only just been partaken of.

After Merryweather had shaken hands with his friend, and introduced Pinkem, he mentioned the reason of their calling. Upon hearing this explanation, Captain Blakeney, who, at first had displayed a little *hauteur*, instantly became very affable, begged them to be seated, and turning to Pinkem, asked him if he had breakfasted. Upon receiving an affirmative reply, Captain Blakeney continued,

“Ah,—everybody who has been in India retains for a short time the early habits they have formed whilst there. It was the same with me ; and indeed I can distinctly remember the time when

I used to breakfast at least two hours earlier than I do now. Do you smoke?"

Pinkem having expressed his willingness to do so, Captain Blakeney called out, "Smart," and immediately one of those beings, y'clept "tigers," made his appearance through some folding doors. His height was about five feet—of his age, it would be impossible to form an opinion—anywhere between fourteen and twenty, might have hit the mark, while his countenance indicated a character that could be good, bad or indifferent according as circumstances required. The only thing which could be predicated of him with certainty was, that he possessed a shrewdness, which to use an expression of his own, very materially assisted him in seeing a very long way through a stone wall.

"Bring some cigars," said his master, "light the taper, and clear away the breakfast things."

All these orders having been executed

in an incredibly short space of time, the trio were puffing away at the most unexceptionable of havannahs. To Merryweather's astonishment, Pinkem, whose conversational powers he had always thought to be very limited, except on subjects which had come under his immediate notice, now boldly launched into observations on the new operas, and the principal performers, interspersed with Parisian *on dits*, and so many capital jokes that he kept his friends in a continual state of laughter for above an hour. His natural shrewdness had indeed taught him even during his short sojourn in Paris, that a passing knowledge of the frivolous subjects which constitute the staple of conversation in fashionable life, was easily obtained, and his present display was a proof at once, of the capacity he possessed to acquire information on other subjects than those which the incidents of a life in camp brought under his attention, and of the industry

with which he had applied himself to his self imposed task. The effect produced on Captain Blakeney was such as to induce him to beg Merryweather and Pinkem to accompany him that night to the opera, where he informed them they would probably meet young Chalmers, with whom he was acquainted ; or, at all events, some of his brother officers. Pinkem readily accepted this invitation, and Merryweather and himself then took their departure.

“We shall never be able to manage without some sort of turn out,” remarked Merryweather, as they proceeded along the street. “Suppose we go to Clarence’s, the Coach builder, and see if we can get anything that will suit us?”

“Why a pair of shafts would make such a fearful inroad on my available capital,” said Pinkem, thoughtfully.

“Oh, I intend to hire one for the season,” said Merryweather, and turning into another street, he soon entered the

establishment he had mentioned. A cabriolet that was exposed for sale immediately caught their attention, and an examination having proved satisfactory, it was secured, and a horse having been met with before the evening, they returned to their hotel to dinner.



## CHAPTER V.

The City swarms intense. The public haunt,  
Full of each theme, and warm with mixed discourse,  
Hums indistinct. The sons of riot flow  
Down the loose stream of false enchanted joy,  
To swift destruction. On the rankled soul  
The gaming fury falls ; and in one gulph  
Of total ruin, honour, virtue, peace,  
Friends, families, and fortune, headlong sink.

*Thomson's Seasons.*

WHEN the evening arrived, Merryweather evinced great unwillingness to accompany Pinkem, but he yielded to the

earnest solicitation of his friend, and from a desire to oblige him, as well as from a sense, perhaps, of the relief some distraction would afford, he prevailed upon himself to drive off to the Italian opera. It was late when they arrived, and the ballet was about to commence. On entering the box which Captain Blakeney occupied, they found several gentlemen besides himself, to whom upon recognising his visitors, Captain Blakeney introduced them. Amongst them Pinkem and Merryweather instantly recognised names, which had acquired too much celebrity in the fashionable world to be unknown, and by these, as the friends of Captain Blakeney, they were received with much courtesy and kindness, till the attractive spectacle which presented itself, upon the curtain being drawn up, put an end to further conversation.

When the performance was over, Captain Blakeney addressing Pinkem,

regretted [the absence of his friend Chalmers, but invited him and Merryweather to supper at a club house, where he possessed that privilege, and where, he said, they would probably meet Chalmers, as he had seen him there in the earlier part of the evening. This invitation having been accepted, they threaded their way through the large concourse of carriages of every description which thronged the approaches to the opera house, and soon arrived at the appointed place.

“Is that your horse?” said Captain Blakeney to Pinkem, stopping, after he had alighted opposite Merryweather’s cabriolet.

“No,” replied Pinkem, “he belongs to Merryweather, and was purchased to day at Tattersall’s.”

“Ah, I thought he would not long remain unsold,” said Captain Blakeney, “for he is a showy looking animal, and his only defect is not visible.”

"What defect?" asked Pinkem, with surprise. "I always considered myself a pretty good judge of a horse, and I confess I should have pronounced him perfectly sound."

"So would any one," said Captain Blakeney, "but you will find if you give him much work that he will go lame. There is something wrong in one of his stifle joints, which no surgeon who has yet seen him, can account for, and in fact this was the reason why I parted with him, for he once belonged to me. I of course gave him a little rest previously to the sale, when he was bought even by a connoisseur, as perfectly sound."

It has been asserted that any man who avers he would not sell a horse for more than his value,—that he would not conceal his defects, or if necessary give unlimited sway to his imagination in descanting on his merits, either speculates on the credulity of his friends,

or is most charmingly simple. Under whichever category such moralists may choose to class our friend Pinkem, it must nevertheless be confessed, that he had never deemed it gentlemanly or honourable to cheat in such matters, and consequently heard with anything but the keen relish it was expected to impart, the gratuitous piece of information thus vouchsafed by Captain Blakeney, while there sprang up in his mind, a most uncompromising determination, not to be the dupe of his new acquaintance in horse dealing or anything else. The remainder of the party now joined them, and Captain Blakeney immediately led the way up stairs into a brilliantly lighted room, where, seated round a card table, were four gentlemen. Three of these were evidently cavalry officers, if the presence of a *moustache*, that emblem of modern chivalry, could be considered as decisive evidence of their rank, but the exceed-

ingly juvenile appearance of the fourth, left it doubtful whether he also was of the same service. The flushed countenance and tremulous hand of this young gentleman, showed that he was labouring under some great excitement, and Pinkem with his usual quickness had just remarked this circumstance, when he was introduced to him by Captain Blakeney, as Lord Earnest Chalmers.

Pinkem, whose suspicions were now as thoroughly awakened as if he had commanded an advanced guard in an enemy's country, thought he observed a look of displeasure cross the countenance of Captain Blakeney, when he witnessed the scene that presented itself on their entrance. If such was the case, it subsided as quickly as it appeared, and scarcely had a minute elapsed when he again wore his usual smile. It was not long before the game that was in progress came to an end, and Lord Earnest Chal-

mers then turning to Captain Blakeney said,—

“I never saw anything so unlucky as the cards have been playing for me. Would you believe it, Blakeney, we have had three rubbers and I have only won a single game?”

“The very reason,” replied Captain Blakeney, “why you should continue playing. The luck is sure to change, and then you’ll have it all your own way. But Captain Pinkem, I hear, is charged with some presents for you. Whilst you are making his acquaintance, I will order supper, after which you shall have your revenge of me at billiards if you like.”

Pinkem, however, could exchange but few words with Lord Earnest, before a proposal was made to play another rubber, which the latter caught at with avidity. Pinkem being thus of necessity a spectator, took a seat at a little distance from the table and keenly watched the players. He soon detected telegraphic

messages passing between two of the parties, and it was evident that Lord Earnest and his partner were being duped. As was to be expected, the side which possessed the advantage of being able to communicate by signs, won, and Lord Earnest paid over the enormous stakes which were at issue with a look in which despair and a hope of still being able to regain them were strangely blended.

Supper was now announced, and the whole party rose, and were adjourning to the room in which it was served, when Pinkem managed, by addressing Lord Earnest, to detain him until every one but themselves had left the room. Pinkem then endeavoured to draw him into conversation, but this he found a difficult matter, for the mind of his intended brother-in-law was running upon his losses at cards, and was absorbed in speculations for making up for them in the course of the evening.



But Pinkem was not to be discouraged. He talked to him of Paris, and of his friends, and gave him an account of the performance that evening at the opera, when he accidentally stumbled upon a subject which at once removed the taciturnity of his companion, by mentioning that the Queen was present.

"The Queen?" said Lord Earnest, endeavouring to look as though he had been attending to every word that Pinkem had been saying. "Yes, it is a very good card. If I had only had it last deal, we should have won the odd trick, which would have given us the rubber."

"Do you play much at whist?" added Pinkem, after a pause.

"Oh, yes, a great deal. I think cards and billiards are the only things capable of relieving the monotony of one's existence," was the reply, though the nervous look and anxious

manner of the speaker certainly did not convey to Pinkem the impression that he derived much pleasure from the pursuit.

"And yet," said Pinkem, "you do not appear to be one of those to whom fortune shows much favour?"

"Indeed you mistake," was the half angry reply. "I have been unlucky to-night, but at other times I am exceedingly fortunate."

"Part of the system," said Pinkem, musingly, but loud enough for Lord Earnest, whose attention was now riveted upon him, to hear. "You have no suspicion then," he added confidentially, "of having been duped to night? Nay, start not, I have been watching your game as a looker-on, and I have good grounds for asking the question."

"None whatever," said Lord Earnest.

"And yet," replied Pinkem, "I detected a regular system of communication between your opponents by signs, which

must have made them perfectly aware of the winning cards which each held. "Now," he continued in an earnest manner, "if you have lost to any considerable extent, we can, I believe, win every farthing back again."

"How?" said Lord Earnest, eagerly, his eyes brightening at the suggestion.

"Why I heard Captain Blakeney offer to give you your 'revenge' at billiards after supper, so I conclude, he, as well as others has won money from you?"

"To a larger amount than any."

"And in an equally unscrupulous manner I make no doubt," replied Pinkem, drily, "and therefore we will fight him with his own weapons. It will be a just retribution. Propose therefore a match, and I will play with you against him and some one else. They shall win the first game, but if at its termination you see me chalking my cue, get as high bets as you can for the second."

"You are a stranger to me," said Lord Earnest, hesitatingly.

"True. But I have brought you letters from your family which should entitle me to some confidence, and I have other and stronger grounds, which I hope some day to express, for desiring to serve you."

"But are you so very good a player?" said Lord Earnest, still hesitating.

"Yes," said Pinkem, carelessly, "if running the game off the balls, upon an average once in three times, constitutes one. Not that I have reason to be proud of the accomplishment, for I must confess that for months, whilst I was in India, a cue was very seldom out of my hands. But let us join the rest now, and if you wish to regain what you have been robbed of, remember the part you are to play. I pledge you my word, I only wish to extricate you from the hands of sharpers."

During supper Pinkem entered

generally into conversation, and at its termination sauntered with the rest into the billiard room. He then selected a cue from the rack and began playing a few strokes upon the table.

"Will you play?" said Captain Blakeney to him, taking up another cue.

"Oh, presently I will," replied Pinkem. "I won't interrupt the game you have already arranged."

"Suppose we make up a match instead," said Lord Earnest, "that is to say if you have no objection, Blakeney?"

"None at all, my dear fellow. I shall be delighted. How shall we arrange it. Merryweather, will you join us?"

"I shall be very happy," was the reply, "but I am afraid that you will find me a very indifferent player."

"Then of the two, I suppose you are the most skilful," said Captain Blakeney, turning quickly to Pinkem.

"Yes, I believe I do play the best," replied Pinkem, casting at the same

time an imploring look at Merryweather, who he saw was about to enter into most disagreeable particulars.

"Ah, then, you shall play with Chalmers, since he always will insist that he is not so strong at the game as I am, though I fear he sadly overrates my powers."

"These arrangements having been made, Captain Blakeney commenced playing, having previously enquired of Lord Earnest whether their bet of two hundred pounds, under the circumstances, was to stand good, upon which point he was answered in the affirmative.

Pinkem soon perceived that Captain Blakeney was concealing his play, and from the manner in which he struck his ball, saw that he was a skilful manager of the cue. On his own part, he took care to make some good strokes, but pretended an utter ignorance of the science of the game, which completely blinded Captain Blakeney, who

set him down as a very second rate performer. As neither party, therefore, were putting forth their strength, the game continued pretty even till it approached the end, when Captain Blakeney made a push for it, and won easily.

"You ought to give me odds the next game," said Lord Earnest to Captain Blakeney, not even waiting to see if Pinkem made the preconcerted signal.

"Quite an accident our winning, I assure you," said Captain Blakeney, placing in his pocket book two crisp notes each of a hundred pounds, that Lord Earnest handed him. "I have no objection though to do as you propose, since you are the loser, and you must remember to grant me the same indulgence when you win. What odds do you think I ought to give?"

"I think two to one."

"Come, I will give you five to three."

"In thousands then, and I will take you."

"Large sums, very large sums to stake," said Captain Blakeney, shaking his head, as if he doubted the propriety of accepting the offer, "but I suppose I must submit if you insist upon it."

"Then it is agreed?" said Lord Earnest.

"Yes, oh yes, since it is your wish," replied Captain Blakeney.

The game was therefore proceeded with, and Pinkem, who now knew exactly the strength of the table, "went off," and brought both balls into balk. Captain Blakeney next played, but without any success, leaving the balls in a very advantageous position for Pinkem, who made thirty off them without stopping. The game now became intensely exciting, for when Captain Blakeney next had an opportunity of playing, he threw aside the mask and exerted himself to the utmost to recover the



ground he had lost, and soon showed himself to be little inferior in skill to Pinkem. Luck also favoured him and he soon greatly diminished the difference in the score. Such large sums of money depended upon the game, that not only the performers, but the spectators also, took a deep interest in its progress. As each player steadied his hand preparatory to making a stroke, every breath was held,—silence so deep prevailed, that a pin might have been heard to drop, and then, as the ivory balls rattled sharply against each other, or rebounding from the cushions, rolled over the level surface of the table, every head was bent eagerly forward to see the result. For above a quarter of an hour each party enjoyed varied success, but at last Pinkem ran up another long score, and terminated the game in favour of his partner and himself.

Captain Blakeney whose feelings were generally under his entire control,

on this occasion lost his self command, and attributing the loss of the game to his folly in becoming a party to a match, vowed that he would never play another as long as he lived. Having imparted this piece of information to his auditors, he proceeded to make one of those general observations, which, while it embraced the whole party, was applicable to no individual in particular, leaving it to be inferred, however, that to meet with fair play was not always a necessary consequence of playing with gentlemen, and concluded by offering to compete with anyone in the room for five thousand pounds.

"If Captain Pinkem will play, I shall be very happy to take up the bet," said Lord Earnest.

Pinkem volunteered to do so, and Captain Blakeney delighted at the prospect of recovering the loss he had sustained in the previous game, instantly

prepared to play, experiencing, probably, the same sort of feeling as that which induced Napoleon, on a somewhat more important occasion, to exclaim, "These English I hold them then!" But Pinkem played with even greater skill than he had yet shewn, and he moreover possessed the advantage of being perfectly cool, whereas Captain Blakeney was evidently much excited. The consequence was, the former won, a consummation no sooner announced by the marker than the greater part of those present who, upon the principle perhaps of the French proverb, *ce n'est que la verite qui blesse*, had been considerably nettled at Captain Blakeney's remarks, testified their delight by an unanimous burst of applause. This so exasperated Captain Blakeney that he left the room, vowing vengeance upon every one, and was followed by a derisive shout of laughter.

The whole party now began to separate, and Pinkem was about to wish Lord Earnest good night, when, much to his satisfaction, the latter came up to him and expressed a hope that he would come to a ball, that was to be given by Lady Carlbrook in the course of the week.

"Let me see," said Pinkem, taking out a pocket book and endeavouring, as he looked over a memorandum, to conceal the delight with which he heard the invitation. "Friday you say? Yes, I shall be very happy."

"That's right," said Lord Earnest, "but now I must thank you for the service you have rendered me, not that I shall win money by your success, for Blakeney has my notes of hand for above nine thousand."

"Then I should advise you to get them from him with as little delay as possible."

"That I certainly shall. It was with the hope of winning sufficient to pay him, that I played all the previous part of the evening at cards. But though I have lost a great deal of money I am now out of debt, and nothing shall ever induce me to gamble again."

"A wise determination !" said Pinkem, "for independently of the risk of losing, the successful gambler, in my opinion, has not only little to be proud of, but necessarily pockets his winnings at the sacrifice of all good feeling, and is perhaps in the end, the greatest loser of the two."

Whether when the *ci-devant* Lieutenant, now Captain Pinkem, delivered himself of this moral axiom he had a very distinct recollection of his friend the Rajah, or whether he thought there was an essential difference between a young sub winning a few pagodas from an Indian potentate, and a rich man of the world attempting to increase his means

by plundering an inexperienced young officer like Lord Earnest, we do not pretend to say. We believe, however, it was sincerely uttered at the time, for the benefit of a man some years younger than himself, and its abstract truth cannot be questioned. "But by Jove," added Pinkem, "it is broad daylight, and there I see Merryweather preparing to be off. By the way, I forgot. Tomorrow or rather this evening, I shall be disengaged. Come and dine with me at my hotel. Here is one of my cards with the direction on it. I shall expect you. Good bye."

So saying Pinkem hastened to join Merryweather, and they then drove off to their hotel, whither they arrived just as the shutters in the various rooms were being opened, and the daily toil of sweeping, dusting and polishing, had been begun by those unfortunate beings, whose business it is to spend a life time in promoting the domestic comfort of

128      FRANK MERRYWEATHER.

fellow mortals, who have happened to  
draw a higher ticket in fortune's  
lottery.

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CHAPTER VI.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,  
A thronging scene of figures bright.  
*Scott.*

THE next evening at eight o'clock, Lord Earnest sat down with Pinkem and Merryweather to dinner, at their hotel.



Now that he was released from the oppression occasioned by his losses at play, he proved himself to be a very different person from that which he had appeared on the previous evening. His wit was ready, his perceptions quick, and his manner agreeable. As the evening progressed, their conversation was perhaps a little indebted to the excellence of the wine for its continual flow, and regardless of the rapid movements of the imperturbable old enemy, it was late before any proposal was made to leave the table.

"There is yet time though," said Lord Earnest, looking at his watch "to meet the people coming out of the Opera House, I promised to be there for the Ballet everyone speaks so highly of, but since it is too late for that, I must go and make the best excuse I can."

"We will walk over there with you," said Pinkem, "though we won't," he continued, laughing, "have recourse

afterwards to cards and billiards, to relieve the monotony of our existence."

"Come a truce to that," said Lord Earnest, taking Pinkem's arm. "'*Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.*'"

"Exactly so," said Pinkem, who, though he did not understand the latter part of the sentence, saw no reason why he should allow so trifling an incident to stand in the way of his making a reply, but he did fail to add, *sotto voce*, as he glanced at his companion, "Fresh from school, evidently!"

They arrived at the Opera House, just as the performance was over, and on entering the crush room, one of the party with whom they had passed the previous evening, joined them and said—

"Ah Chalmers, you have lost much by not keeping your promises."

"Was the performance so very good, then?" asked Lord Earnest.

"Performance? never once gave it a

thought. My attention was taken up the whole time by a far more attractive subject,—the prettiest girl I ever saw in my life. She was in company too, with Lord and Lady Carlbrook and your brother, so you, Chalmers, ought to know who she is?"

"Indeed I do not," said Lord Earnest.

"Then you probably will before long," was the reply, "for I promise you, Marsdale, lucky fellow! saw as little of the Ballet as I did, and was paying her the greatest attention the whole time, though I must confess he was not rewarded as he must have wished. There she is coming this way."

All eyes were now turned in the direction indicated by the speaker, when, what was Merryweather's surprise to see, leaning upon her father's arm, his cousin Constance! That form which had ever been so familiar to him since the first day they had met, suddenly appeared like an apparition. She was

in every respect the same as when he had last seen her. Even her hair was arranged as formerly, and her handsome features still wore the same proud though mild expression. All this he saw at a glance, but before he could make up his mind what course to pursue, he heard Mr. Munroe call Lord Marsdale by name, and beg him to take charge of his daughter whilst he looked without for their carriage, and he did not fail to observe, that Mr. Munroe spoke to him as if they were intimately acquainted.

This circumstance, added to the observations he had just heard, instantly caused Merryweather to suspect Mr. Munroe's plans, and as his eye rested upon Lord Marsdale, for once in his life, he hated bitterly. As they approached the staircase they passed so close to Merryweather, that only a few yards intervened between them, when Constance happening to raise her head, met the eye that was so intently fixed upon her.

She started. Her cheek became deadly pale, and from her lips the crimson tide so far receded, as to leave them of an ashen hue. But no other emotion did she evince. Her eye was at once withdrawn, and she passed him, with whom all her ideas of happiness were associated, as though he had been a stranger. He, too, was calm, as soon as they had passed, but it was the calmness of despair,—a calmness created by such an intensity of grief, as for the time to suppress any outward manifestation. But this only lasted till he reached his hotel. In the solitude of his own chamber, where no inquisitive eyes could watch him, one burning tear after another coursed down his cheek, and though his lips were firmly, even fiercely closed, a convulsive sound would occasionally escape, and betray the deep wound which can alone thus overcome man's stubborn nature.

In the mean time, it had become

rumoured among the group whom we left in the crush room, that the young lady who had attracted such general admiration, was Miss Munroe, and Lord Earnest who was familiar with the name, and remembered that about a year previously his family had taken a trip to Paris, in company with that of Mr. Munroe's, mentioned this fact to Pinkem, whereupon, that astute gentleman, who knew how matters stood between Merryweather and his cousin, proceeded, with the hope of being of service to them, to obtain all the information it was in the power of Lord Earnest to impart.

"It appears," said Pinkem, the next morning after he had obtained admission into Merryweather's room, "from the account Lord Earnest gave me last night, that your uncle's family went to Paris in company with Lord Carlbrook's about a year ago, and that they remained together for above a couple of months,

when owing to some reason or another, which he was unable to explain, they very suddenly separated."

"I heard," said Merryweather, "from my uncle Ponsonby, part of what you have just told me, though he never mentioned anything about Lord Carlbrook."

"And, I," said Pinkem, "now remember to have heard Lady Clara talk of Miss Munroe as a great friend of hers, so if we had been a little more communicative we might have arrived at all this before. But what I came chiefly to tell you about is, that Mr. Munroe and his daughter are to be at Lady Carlbrook's ball to night, and here is an invitation which I made Lord Earnest give me for you."

The most conflicting thoughts passed through Merryweather's mind at this information. That an opportunity should occur to speak to his cousin he considered highly improbable, but

then he would perhaps be able to determine whether his suspicions of the previous evening had any foundation. He also felt that his appearance in society would show her that others did not take the same view of his case, as that which she had been taught to believe, and he further hoped that this would tend to throw a doubt on all that had been said to her on the subject. He therefore resolved to avail himself of the invitation which had been procured through the intervention of Pinkem, and after thanking him for his kindness, he promised to accompany him in the evening to Belgrave Square.

“Well,” said Pinkem, hesitating, “I shall go very early, because I am afraid the fair Clara will be engaged to dance for the whole evening, unless I am there in time.”

“Any time you like,” said Merryweather.



"Then to be plain," said Pinkem, "though I am afraid you will think me very mysterious, there is a reason why I wish to arrive first, so for once you must humour me, and not start for an hour or two after I have taken my departure."

Merryweather readily gave his assent to this request, and Pinkem feeling that his presence at that moment was irksome to his friend, shortly afterwards left the room to get through the day in the best manner he could by himself. His usual resources, however, for occasions like these entirely failed him now, though whether this was owing to sundry reminiscences of a certain pair of bright eyes that he was to see that evening at Lady Carlbrook's ball, has never been divulged; but certain it is, that he found it a more difficult task to "kill time" on that day than he had ever experienced before.

At ten o'clock in the evening, after

having performed his toilet with more than ordinary care, he drove off to the residence of Lady Carlbrook in Belgrave Square. The spacious house was brilliantly lighted, and from the open windows proceeded the sound of numerous voices in conversation. That it was a *reunion* at which the fashionable world had congregated in large numbers, was also apparent from the number of carriages that thronged that side of the square, and through which Pinkem had some difficulty in threading his way. As he ascended the ample staircase, the music struck up, and on entering the anteroom where Lady Chalmers was waiting to receive her company, he bowed, and was about to pass on, when Lord Earnest at this moment came up and introduced him.

The appearance that Lady Carlbrook presented in her evening attire, with a well arranged, though rather elaborate, coiffure, was certainly very stately, and

Pinkem's hopes instantly sank to zero as he looked upon her stern though still handsome countenance. Indeed, there was little in it that could warrant the most lively imagination in supposing that she would ever listen to a tale of love. Her manner, however, was exceedingly gracious to Pinkem, in whose praise Lord Earnest had been very eloquent, and it was not till the arrival of some fresh guests that she desisted from conversing with him.

"I wish," said Pinkem to Lord Earnest, as they proceeded together into the room which was appropriated to dancing, "that you would introduce me to that young lady who was at the opera the other night. I just heard her name announced."

"Oh, certainly," said Lord Earnest.

"Then in doing so, perhaps you would manage to pronounce my name as indistinctly as possible, because I am afraid that to her it is associated with

disagreeable recollections. I will tell you why I wish to be introduced. Her cousin, Merryweather, is desperately in love with her, as she is also with him I believe, though now she will not even speak to him, on account of that duel in India. Now I have not the slightest doubt that she has heard a totally wrong version of the matter and since I am nearly the only person who can thoroughly explain it, I have resolved upon doing so. There, they have sat down on the opposite side of the room,—go up and talk to them. I will walk by in a few minutes, and say a few words *en passant*, when you can introduce me.”

“Lord Earnest, who was too young to be taken into the family councils, and who was therefore ignorant of his father’s and Mr. Munroe’s plans, good-naturedly complied with all these requisitions, and Pinkem, who came past in a few minutes, was duly intro-

duced to our heroine,—Lord Earnest so well fulfilling his instructions that Pinkem could not even recognise his own name. He was instantly accepted as a partner for the next dance; and as it happened to be a quadrille, and the music struck up a preparatory air, Pinkem at once led his partner to the head of the room, for whatever were his plans, or however much his attention might be engaged, it was never any part of his tactics to remain in obscurity. Just as he had selected a position that appeared to him satisfactory, he heard the voice of one whom he had as yet glanced for in vain, say—

“Constance, dear, will you be our vis-a-vis?”

Pinkem turned and caught the eye of the speaker. Never did the tell tale colour mount with greater rapidity into any fair one's cheek, than the blush that now suffused itself over the delicate complexion of Lady Clara. She was so

completely taken by surprise too, that she was perfectly unable to conceal the confusion into which she was thrown. But Pinkem, whose *aplomb* was equal to any emergency; put an end to her embarrassment by instantly addressing her in that easy manner which no one could assume more readily than himself, and which was best calculated to restore her self-possession.

As the quadrille was about to commence, they were soon obliged to conclude their conversation, and Lady Clara's partner then led her to the opposite side of the room. But what was her surprise and subsequent indignation to see Pinkem, who, on several previous occasions, had expressed his devoted attachment to her, now, without the slightest disguise, apparently make the very fiercest love to his partner! Indeed the earnest and even passionate manner in which Pinkem was speaking, combined with the anxious, timid appearance pre-

• sented by his listener, quite warranted such a conclusion. It was another's cause however, that he was pleading, and an able advocate he proved himself to be, carrying conviction with every word he uttered, not by his eloquence, or a happy choice of expressions, though the latter were not wanting, but from the force which truth, sincerity, and disinterestedness never fail to impart. His success was complete, and he had the satisfaction of hearing from the lips of her whom he was addressing, sufficient to convince him that he had attained his object.

The angry glances that he now perceived were being cast from under the long lashes of Lady Clara's eyes, began to give him some uneasiness.

But uneasiness was changed to alarm, when in one of the evolutions of the dance, she precipitately withdrew the little hand that he had ventured to detain a moment longer than necessary within his own. Shortly after the

termination of the quadrille, therefore, he anxiously seized the opportunity of her being for a moment seated alone on the sofa, to utter a few words in explanation, and to beg that she would dance the next waltz with him. She thought she was engaged; but he pleaded so earnestly for the benefit of any doubt that might exist, that resolves, a minute before considered to be immutable, vanished, and Pinkem's star was once more in the ascendant.

At about this time Merryweather made his appearance in the ball room. Instantly his eye wandered over the gay scene and over the many elegant figures in the room, till it alighted on his cousin. On her it dwelt, and so complete was the fascination, that he neither heard nor saw what was passing around him. Whilst his attention was thus absorbed, he came into actual collision with his uncle. Mr. Munroe, who immediately recognised him,



started back as suddenly as if he had touched some contaminating object, and Merryweather, upon turning round to apologize, as he thought, to a stranger, encountered the excessively stern gaze of his relative. His first impulse was to pass on without noticing his uncle, but irritated at the rude stare that was fixed upon him, he said,—

“You have much apparent difficulty in recognising me, sir! Perhaps, therefore, you will allow me to assure you, that I am the same Mr. Frank Merryweather who received a letter from you a short time ago, full of the grossest misstatements, for which I should hope you are now willing, for your own sake, to apologize.”

“That letter, sir,” said Mr. Munroe, drawing himself up till the back part of his head nearly touched the wall, though his feet were half a yard from the wainscot, “I thought would have

been sufficient to convey to you my opinion on the subject to which it referred, and would have saved me the annoyance of all further communication either verbally or in writing."

"Mr. Munroe," said Merryweather, firmly, "there was no occasion to resort to hypocrisy to secure yourself against what you are pleased to term annoyance from me. Let me be understood, however. If you ever should see fit to acknowledge the injustice of your letter, and look upon the occurrence which I so sincerely deplore in its true light, I assure you that I shall be most willing to forget the wrong you have done me in writing it."

A supercilious loftiness, not unmixed with an expression of triumph, spread itself over Mr. Munroe's countenance on hearing these words, which plainly indicated his intention neither to respond to the offer of conciliation thus made, nor to carry on any further

communication whatever. Merryweather, therefore, sensible that a continuance of the conversation would probably lead to an altercation, turning on his heel, moved off in disgust.

As soon as Mr. Munroe had a little recovered the surprise occasioned by so unexpected an interview, he determined to take his daughter from the ball; but while waiting till the termination of a dance should allow of his resolution being carried into effect, it occurred to him that it would be out of the question to let a person, labouring under the ban of his displeasure, thus interfere with his movements. He therefore came to a different decision, and immediately that the dance was finished, sought out his daughter, and bade her remain by his side for the remainder of the evening.

"I suppose you know who is here?" he said, after he had led her to a

sofa, a little apart from the rest of the company.

His daughter, with as much composure as she could assume, answered in the negative, for though the truth instantly flashed across her mind, the crowded state of the ball room had as yet prevented her from seeing Merryweather.

"Your scoundrel cousin is actually present in this very room," said Mr. Munroe, a crimson flush overspreading his forehead as he spoke. "But why this emotion, Constance? Let me see no more of these absurdities, unless you wish to incur my irrevocable displeasure. I would sooner," he continued, giving way to his passion, "see you dead at my feet, than that you should ever meet him again upon the same footing as formerly."

She made no reply. She sat quite motionless. But her eye became brighter, and her hand, that before had

trembled violently, now became perfectly steady.

"Aye," he went on, "and let me tell you, that I will have no likes or dislikes. I have marked well the repulses with which you have met Lord Marsdale's attentions this evening. But I tell you that if you persist in endeavouring to thwart my plans for your settlement in life, you shall receive my bitterest curse."

Still she was silent, though a wonderful change came over her usually placid features. No look of fear or supplication was there. Resolution was plainly written in every lineament. He had at last strained the chord too tightly. His influence over his daughter was at an end.

She had endured with patience, during her past life, the cold and repulsive looks which invariably greeted any show of affection on her part,—she had witnessed with pain

the callousness displayed for her happiness, her wishes, or her feelings. Yet filial duty had hitherto so far triumphed, that his slights and indifference were even met with some favorable construction, and latterly she had even listened without complaint to the reproaches heaped upon him, who held the first place in her affections. But the explanations of that evening threw a new light on her father's conduct, and his harsh words, combined with the disbelief she now felt of all she had been told on the subject most interesting to her, completely destroyed the influence he had wielded with such undeviating severity.

Pinkem who by this time had discovered Merryweather, hastened to impart to him the good news of which he was the bearer. "I have conversed with Miss Munroe," he said, "and have succeeded in convincing her of the error under which

she was labouring with regard to you, and if you wish for confirmation of what I say, you would, I feel assured, hear it from her own lips."

Merryweather pressed the hand that was proffered to him in congratulation, but he could make no reply. Joy and gratitude had for the moment deprived him of the power of utterance. He understood, now, why Pinkem wished to start for the ball first.

"There is only one thing to be done," said Pinkem, "which is, to get that Mr. Munroe; whom I should have recognised from your description if I had met him on the top of one of the Pyramids, out of the way,—though I must confess I scarcely know how that is to be accomplished. How closely he keeps guard!"

"He does so," said Merryweather, "because he is aware I am here."

We have spoken to each other, and he is still as badly disposed towards me as ever."

"The old reprobate!" said Pinkem, indignantly.

"But that," continued Merryweather, "is now a matter of very minor importance, and after what you tell me, one that I think I can afford to laugh at."

"Yes. But I should be the better able to appreciate the joke, if you could find means to foil him, and notwithstanding his surveillance, say a few words to your cousin before the end of the evening."

"I shall be on the *qui vive* you may depend," said Merryweather.

So saying they separated,—Pinkem to bask in the smiles of his fair mistress,—Merryweather to wait till an opportunity should occur, of speaking to his cousin. For a long time he watched without success. He saw parties for



the dance introduced to her, to whom it was evident she always pleaded some excuse, and he observed also an attempt which he conceived to be some device of Pinkem's, to allure Mr. Munroe away, but still he kept his place, — still his angry countenance scowled by the side of his beautiful daughter, and Merryweather began to despair.

Fortune, however, favoured him when he least expected it. Supper was announced at a moment when Lady Carlbrook happened to be conversing with Mr. Munroe, and she thereupon took his arm, and proposed their adjournment to the room where it was served. He had no alternative but to comply, and though greatly disinclined to leave his daughter alone, yet he foresaw the impossibility of making any excuse, and quitted the room, therefore, with his noble hostess.

“Now or never,” thought Merryweather, as he hastened towards his cousin, though he scarcely knew how, for the lights and mirrors of the brilliant ball room, and the gay dresses, and fair forms of its occupants, were mingled in a confused mass before his eyes. The next minute he was by his cousin’s side holding one of her hands in his own.

“Constance, dear Constance,” he said, “I have looked forward with greater eagerness than I can express, to this moment, but now a friend,—a very kind friend has forestalled me in what I wished to say. Tell me Constance, that you believe what he told you.”

“Oh, indeed I do, dear Frank, and I will never again believe what may be said against you. Do forgive me for ever having done so. But if you only knew all that has been said and done to influence me! and I had no means of ascertaining the truth. Yet never once, not even on that

night at the opera, did I love you less than I have always done. You cannot,—indeed you cannot know what a trial that was.”

“I always felt, Constance, that you could not have heard a correct version of this sad occurrence, and I cannot blame you for having so wrongly judged me. It could not have been otherwise, and I even rejoice that you have been so,—so gay,”—

“Yes,” she said with a sigh, “but it has been a gaiety that has made me feel my wretchedness ten thousand times more acutely. Papa has obliged me to go about everywhere, has taken me to the opera, to balls and to fetes, when I could frequently have begged him to allow me to remain quietly at home. That, however, would have been useless.”

“He has been very cruel to you, Constance.”

“He has not been kind,” she replied, shuddering, “but hush,—say no

more, Frank," continued Constance, seeing that he was about to make some indignant remark. "I expect papa will very soon come back, so you must leave me, but,—but you will not entirely cease to think of me, if it should be very,—very long before we meet again?"

"Cease to think of you, Constance! Surely you cannot suppose that time can effect any change with me?"

"No, no, I don't think so," she said, looking into his face with a confiding smile. "But really you must go now. Let us hope for better days. Good bye, dear Frank."

A hurried farewell broke from Merryweather's lips, for at that moment he heard a footstep ascending the stairs, and the next minute, he was among the joyous company below, the happiest of the throng.

How the rest of the evening passed he scarcely knew, and had not an occasional glance from his cousin reassured him of

the reality of their interview, his excited feelings would have made him doubt whether the whole scene were not a delusion.

The entertainment at length began to show symptoms of drawing to a close. In quick succession the equipages of various parties were announced as "stopping the way." Shawls and mantlets began to be in requisition, and many a fair one might have been observed listening to the parting words of some gallant, whose assistance rather retarded than hastened the adjustment of the wrapper with which she was so assiduously enveloped; while ever and anon mammae were heard making petulant exclamations of impatience in the draught, and querulous prophecies of expectant colds.

As Merryweather was waiting in the hall for Pinkem, he saw Mr. Munroe and his daughter descend the stairs. He felt what an intense satisfaction it

would be to speak to his cousin as they passed, and wish her good night, but he also felt that it would be placing her in a position of great difficulty, merely for the sake of gratifying a personal pique, and he instantly, therefore, gave up the idea. To his surprise, however, just as they passed, Constance herself held out her hand and said,—

“Good night, cousin.”

He had but just time to take her hand, when Mr. Munroe pushed violently between them, actually trembling with rage.

“How dare you, sir! Constance, what do you mean?” he said, glancing from one to the other, and hurrying his daughter away to the carriage. But once there, he was silent. He felt the impotency of his wrath. He saw at once that she had formed a determined purpose, that his harshness had driven her to rebellion, and that this act of direct disobedience was the first

proof of his departed influence. He sank into gloomy thought.

In the mean time Pinkem joined Merryweather, and they left the hospitable mansion of their entertainer in company. Upon emerging into the street they found that it was broad day light, and feeling the refreshing influence of the morning air after the hot ball room, they dismissed their conveyance and proceeded to their hotel on foot.

"I shall never be able to thank you sufficiently for your kindness," said Merryweather, as they proceeded arm in arm together. "I have spoken to my cousin, and she now understands perfectly what you, from such kind motives, explained to her. Tell me, however, what success you yourself met with this evening."

"Look!" said Pinkem, holding up his hand, on the little finger of which was a turquoise ring.

"I see," said Merryweather, laughing, "a *gage d'amour*, and I suppose the ring you used to wear on that finger has now a different owner?"

"You might have made a worse guess," said Pinkem, "though," he continued, with a half dissatisfied, half ludicrous air, "I scarcely know what to think of it. Lady Carlbrook's suspicions are already aroused, and she will prove, I fear, invincible."

"Then," said Merryweather, after a pause, "you scarcely know, I suppose, when you will see Lady Clara again?"

"That depends upon circumstances. She does sometimes walk in Kensington gardens, and she may be there this afternoon."

"That is all very well, and I daresay will be very agreeable," said Merryweather, "but I do not, I must confess, see how you are to promote your object by such means."

"Well,—it is impossible to say,—at



all events at present. You will allow, however, I hope, without supposing that you are drawing any rash and violent conclusions, that it is not always deemed expedient to ask papa or mamma's opinion, particularly when you are pretty well convinced beforehand what that opinion will be."

Merryweather came to a stop, surveyed Pinkem from head to foot for a moment, doubting whether even he harboured in his mind all that his words conveyed, and then said,—“You don't mean to say that you intend to—to—”

“Run away with her,” said Pinkem.

They proceeded onwards in silence, each engaged with his own thoughts, till they arrived at their hotel, when, just as they were about to separate, Merryweather abruptly observed,—

“It's not right—it's not right; but I declare I cannot help wishing you success.”

“Thank you,” returned Pinkem; “I

consider that at once a proof of your friendship, and a good omen. Good night."

"Good night," said Merryweather ; and they repaired to their respective apartments.

CHAPTER VII.

Lugete, ô veneres cupidinesque.

*Catullus.*

LADY Clara Chalmers was in a dilemma. She had promised to meet Pinkem in Kensington gardens in the

course of the afternoon. There were obstacles however to such a proceeding which she had not sufficiently considered. She could not go alone, and her duenna, who in the new character of companion, had now become a fixture in the family, would be very unlikely, she feared, to countenance a clandestine meeting. But Miss Duneville, though devotedly fond of Lady Clara, had not always adopted the most judicious manner of evincing her affection. She had never opposed the wishes of her former pupil,—a mode of education which had exercised its due weight in the formation of her character. Without a single precedent, therefore, on which to ground her right of opposition, it is not very wonderful, that when she was assailed with entreaties, caresses, and even tears, her fortitude should begin to show symptoms of wavering; and though she defended her position with great

resolution, reluctantly and by degrees only, withdrawing her available strength from the barriers which she threw up as a temporary means of defence, she was nevertheless at length compelled to yield to the demands of the victor. Before entirely capitulating, however, she made certain provisions which were intended effectually to shield her charge from danger.

Pinkem at the appointed time did not fail to direct his steps towards Kensington gardens. He had been there only a short time when he observed Lady Clara and her companion advancing along one of the paths. He instantly shaped his course so as to meet them, but aware of the embarrassment and annoyance a third party would very soon give rise to, he merely said a few words and passed on, though, if there is a language of the eyes, his must certainly have said a great deal and received a great many replies, for Lady Clara was

apparently very soon aware of the reason Pinkem had for not joining them, and she proceeded, therefore, to follow up her victory of the morning by fresh demands for co-operation on the part of the hitherto irreproachable duenna. There was a beautiful tree,—such a nice seat under it,—so delightful to sit down in the shade, and indeed, oh indeed! five minutes should not elapse before her return. Prudence was again vanquished, and Lady Clara departed alone.

But five minutes! Ye gods be our witness that we would not exaggerate, but the number of minutes stipulated for must be multiplied and re-multiplied by five, if the time that elapsed before Lady Clara's return is to be at all faithfully chronicled. She had not proceeded far before Pinkem was by her side. Her first feeling was that he would think her dreadfully bold in meeting him alone; but alas! long before she ought under the influence

of this feeling to have wended her way back to Miss Duneville, it had lost its empire over her mind,—and then Miss Duneville was so good natured,—she would not object to wait a little longer. Besides they really as yet had said positively nothing; and there were so many things to be told, and so much to hear, that really,—no, really they could not separate yet.

Miss Duneville was *au desespoir*. The shadow cast by the tree under which she sat had gradually, from a dwarfish representation of its original, assumed the gigantic appearance imparted by the setting sun. Frequently, when any one approached, she would first adjust her spectacles, and then peer anxiously, and with increasing disquietude, in the direction from whence the sound proceeded, to satisfy herself whether the approaching party was her *protégée*. After these scrutinies however, had several times resulted in dis

appointment, her anxiety was changed to alarm. But what was she to do! It was impossible to desert her post and go in search of Lady Clara, for that might be the means of missing her altogether. "*Me voila plantée!*" as she very frequently afterwards remarked, in a tone surcharged with the recollection of her distress. There was indeed nothing for it but to wait. In the mean time her imagination, which was of a lively turn, pictured all sorts of calamities. All the narratives she had ever heard of faithless gallants and abducted damsels, rushed with irresistible force upon her recollection, when after she had worked herself into a state of mind too wretched for description, Lady Clara at last made her appearance. So delighted did Miss Duneville thereupon become, that she could scarcely utter a word in remonstrance. Such coaxing, persuasive ways too, had Lady Clara, that it was



impossible to continue cross with her, and long,—oh long, before they had arrived home, Miss Duneville with whom a complete reaction had set in, looked upon the whole occurrence as very natural, thought it extremely fortunate that they had met no one they knew, and gradually subsiding into a sentimental strain, went so far as to tell Lady Clara, with a sigh, that she had herself, perhaps, done quite as foolish things in her day.

*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute,* and Miss Duneville having once stifled the voice of conscience, was visited by no further compunction in lending her assistance to future meetings between Lady Clara and Pinkem. Her only fear now, was not that she was doing wrong, but of detection, and she therefore frequently implored the lovers to be careful, and to avoid the more frequented paths in Kensington gardens, which continued to be the place of

rendezvous. We must nevertheless do her the justice to say, that she anticipated no harm from these clandestine meetings. Moreover, her opinion of Pinkem, who never let an opportunity slip of paying her some compliment, had gradually become extremely favourable, and her partiality for the romantic, gradually superseding every other consideration, she had begun to consider that one so handsome and gallant, would make a most eligible match for her patron's daughter, and frequently intimated her willingness to break the subject to Lady Carlbrook.

There was no such necessity, however, for Lady Carlbrook had remarked the inexplicable partiality of her daughter for Kensington gardens, and as she united considerable decision of character with a quick and suspicious intellect, she resolved to satisfy certain doubts that had arisen in her mind on the subject. Accordingly, having obtained

the escort of her son, Lord Earnest, she one afternoon allowed half-an-hour to elapse after the departure of Lady Clara and Miss Duneville, and then followed them to the scene of their misdoings. She had not long perambulated the grounds, before her eye detected the figure of her daughter in the distance, leaning on the arm of Pinkem, whom she instantly recognised as the person her son had introduced to her on the night of the ball.

"There is your sister," she exclaimed suddenly, "and you of course see with whom she is walking."

"Yes—I think it is Mr. Pinkem," said Lord Earnest, hesitatingly and much surprised, for he stood rather in awe of his mother, and though he had imbibed a sincere friendship for Pinkem, was not prepared to defend his present conduct.

"And I suppose you are a party to the whole thing," said Lady Carlbrook,

turning on him a glance, which shewed that she had already answered the question in her own mind.

"Really," said Lord Earnest, "I am at some loss to discover your reason for supposing me implicated in a proceeding of which I was wholly ignorant."

"Then if you are not accessory to it," replied Lady Carlbrook, "the occurrence is in the first place owing to you. Pray why were we ever honoured with Mr. Pinkem's acquaintance?"

"Because till now," replied her son, "I have always considered him a very particular friend."

"A particular friend indeed!" repeated Lady Carlbrook, with increasing excitement. "Have you not yet learnt sufficient of the world to perceive that he is a mere adventurer? If something as palpable as this had not happened, and which I suppose is sufficient to open even your eyes, we should I presume have heard you interceding

in behalf of his claim to enter the family."

"Such a thing I never dreamt of," said Lord Earnest, "but this I will say of Mr. Pinkem, though I am not prepared to defend his conduct in the present instance, that any other term than gentleman were misapplied to him."

"Do you intend to question what your mother says?" returned Lady Carlbrook, haughtily.

Her son not offering any observation in reply to this somewhat absolute query, they walked onwards in silence, rapidly gaining at every step upon Pinkem and Lady Clara, who in fancied security, were quietly wending their way along the banks of the Serpentine, while their thoughts were busily employed in conjuring up romantic visions of never failing bliss.

The sound of steps first struck upon the ear of Lady Clara, and upon turning

round she perceived her mother rapidly approaching. How instantly did the fairy superstructure which she had been so industriously building, crumble to its base, and how dreadful was the sudden transition which her mother's presence occasioned, from the bright region of fancy in which she had been revelling, to the sad realities of her actual position. Alas poor Clara! Never even now can your faithful historian recal that event, without deeply sympathising with your distress! Relinquishing the arm of Pinkem, and never once daring to look up, she stood trembling and changing colour, the picture of the guilty little thing she was, and while she awaited with downcast eyes the advent of Lady Carlbrook, she almost wished that the ground would open beneath her feet, and save her from the approaching scene.

"Perhaps, Clara," said her mother coming close to her side, you will favour me

with your company now, and I think that we may thank this gentleman for his attention in constituting himself your escort, and dispense with his further services."

"If your ladyship," said Pinkem, "would allow me to explain"—

"There is no necessity, sir, I assure you," said Lady Carlbrook, turning away and retracing her steps in the direction from whence she had appeared. "And where is Miss Duneville?" she continued to her daughter, after they had proceeded onwards a little way.

"I don't know,—I think,—she may be, that is to say,"—

"If you know where she is, there can be little difficulty in answering my question," said Lady Carlbrook, quietly. "Is she here at all?"

"Oh yes!" said Lady Clara, with something of the tone of an injured person.

"Then perhaps you can inform me, if

we are proceeding in the right direction to meet her ?”

“ Yes,” replied Lady Clara, with a sigh, half forgetting her own troubles in considering the probable course that would be pursued towards her old *gouvernante*. “ I think I see her under those trees.”

Lady Carlbrook made no further remark but took the direction indicated by her daughter. She seldom wasted words on a matter which required her to act.

Miss Duneville, who without her spectacles (and for some reason, she had a particular objection to wearing them,) could see nothing beyond a few yards, was not aware of who was approaching, till Lady Carlbrook and her companions had come quite close to the bench on which she was seated. So completely was she overwhelmed by surprise, that she could not command the utterance of a word, and remained perfectly silent,—the best course perhaps under the circumstances that she could adopt.



"Miss Duneville," said Lady Carlbrook, "I am sorry to find that you have proved yourself so totally unqualified to be the companion of my daughter; and you must be perfectly aware of the necessary consequence of such a discovery. We must part."

Miss Duneville by a muttered sound and an inclination of her head, seemed to acquiesce in the propriety of such a step.

"I have no wish," continued Lady Carlbrook, "to put you to unnecessary inconvenience. If, therefore, the delay of a week would facilitate any new arrangements you may wish to make, pray continue to occupy the rooms which have always been at your disposal, but I beg to be distinctly understood, that no further communication is to take place between my daughter and yourself."

Miss Duneville, who was possessed of considerable independence of spirit, felt her pride wounded by the offer of a favour under such circumstances, and said—

"Your ladyship need be under no apprehension, I shall leave your house this evening."

"Perhaps such a course would be the best," said Lady Carlbrook, slightly bowing as she moved off.

But let us return to Pinkem.—What were his sensations? "Ah!" he said to himself, as he mechanically followed the party at a little distance, "a most awkward business,—that majestic-looking mamma too, — most uncompromising person,—gave me the most decided rebuff I ever experienced in my life,—cut short the flowery and brilliant address that I was about to make before three words of it were uttered.—Poor Clara too, left to her tender mercies. I wonder what will be said to her. Ah, it's a bad business."

Under the influence of these reflections he walked slowly on, till he saw Lady Carlbrook,—from whose party he never withdrew his eye, since the unceremo-

nious leave she had taken of him,—proceed towards Miss Duneville, and justly supposed that it was for the purpose of giving her her conge. He was sincerely grieved on her account, and as soon, therefore, as the amiable but not over prudent spinster had been left by Lady Carlbrook's departure to ruminate over the unexpected turn affairs had taken, he hastened to the spot where she was seated.

"Oh, Mr. Pinkem!" she said on perceiving him, "What have you done, —what is the meaning of all this?"

"Well, Miss Duneville, the whole thing may be summed up in a very few words.—Lady Clara avails herself of my escort. We walk along the banks of the Serpentine, forgetful of everybody in the world but ourselves.—You are seated where I now find you.—Suddenly Lady Carlbrook appears, takes Lady Clara under her maternal protection, and informs you that she can dispense

with your services for the future. That portion of the *tableau* which refers to you is, I suppose, correct?"

"Oh, too true!" said Miss Duneville, with an hysterical sob, "and I am never to see my dear *charmante* Clara again. Ah! you naughty man," she continued, holding up her finger, "I do not wonder that you,—what you call it—fall in love!"

"But you know, *mademoiselle*," said Pinkem, "that disasters are not repaired by repining. Now I have a plan, which if I can successfully carry out, you shall, I promise you, enjoy the society of Lady Clara for ever afterwards."

"Oh, tell me how," said Miss Duneville, evidently much delighted at the idea, "do tell me!"

"Well," said Pinkem, "I shall require your assistance!"

"Certainly," said Miss Duneville, with a disappointed look, "but what can I do?"

"Why, you will be able to devise some scheme for keeping up a correspondence with Lady Clara, will you not?"

"No. I am afraid not—her mamma always looks at her letters. Stay though—through Mrs. Margery I think I can write."

"Very well," said Pinkem, "I shall leave you to arrange that matter; but remember, my plan, which you shall hear more of another time, depends entirely upon the success of your arrangements in this respect. And now, mademoiselle, where shall I see you again?"

"If you will call at these lodgings," she said, writing down a direction on a piece of paper and giving it to Pinkem, "I shall be very glad to see you."

"Thank you," said Pinkem, taking the memorandum, "I will call tomorrow. *Au revoir.*"

So saying he gallantly kissed the tips

of his straw coloured gloves in parting,  
and having quitted Kensington gardens,  
was soon in company with Merryweather,  
relating the adventures we have just  
described.

## CHAPTER VIII.

O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad ;  
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad ;  
Though father and mither and a' should gae mad,  
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.

*Burns.*

THE next day Pinkem called at the house, of which he had been given the direction, and was immediately shown

into a well furnished apartment, where Miss Duneville was seated. So intently, however, was she engaged at a table covered with papers, books and writing materials, that she did not discover Pinkem till he had advanced half way into the room.

"Ah monsieur Pinkem," she said, rising, "you have come to see me, and I have been thinking that you meant it all in joke."

"Then, mademoiselle," said Pinkem, "you could not have sufficiently considered how much I should be the loser in not keeping an appointment, that was to confer on me the pleasure of your society."

"Ah, thank you, but you must take care that none of your gay acquaintance hear what a pretty speech you can make to an old woman like me, or they will all laugh. But pray sit down, monsieur Pinkem," continued Miss Duneville, bustling about to get the things on the



table into a little order, "and excuse the state in which you find me."

"There is nothing to excuse, Mademoiselle," said Pinkem. "Here are evident signs of your being an authoress, and that is a subject for congratulation, but you have not yet told me the particulars of your departure from Lady Carlbrook's."

"I was dreadfully distressed I assure you, Mr. Pinkem," said Miss Duneville, "when Lady Clara came to wish me good-bye, and then throw her arms round me and cry, and then I cried, and was so very unhappy to part from her. It is the first time for ten years that it has happened. But I remember you have some plan, Mr. Pinkem, which you promised to tell me?"

"In the first place, Mademoiselle, have you made arrangements for us to correspond?"

"Yes," replied Miss Duneville, "Mrs. Margery, but listen, — oh Heavens !

I hear her coming up stairs. She promised to come to day, and I quite forgot all about it. What can be done? She is so suspicious and has heard all about that business in the park."

"Oh, here—I have it," said Pinkem, opening a closet and getting in. "Now shut the door."

Scarcely had this been accomplished, when Mrs. Margery, who was a short stout person came rolling into the room.

"Ah, Mamselle," she said, "I promised you I'd look in, and you see I've kept my word. How do you find yourself?"

"Very well, thank you," said Miss Duneville, "but I am very busy."

Totally disregarding this hint, if indeed she perceived it, Mrs. Margery proceeded to gather up the folds of her dress, which by the way was a brilliant red silk, with a gorgeous blue pattern spread all

over it, and having at last arranged it to her satisfaction, she threw herself back into an arm chair, with an impetus that carried her little short legs several feet from the ground.

"So you are very busy, Mamselle?" she said, drawing her breath after this achievement.

"Yes," said Miss Duneville, pointing to the table, "there is my work."

"Ah, them books again. For my part I never could see the good they ever did a body."

"No," replied Miss Duneville, not quite comprehending the observation, "they are for the good of the mind, not of the body, Mrs. Margery."

"It is all very well for them as thinks so to say so, but I am of a different opinion. I knows what I knows, and I knows this,—I've raised myself to what I am without any help from em. So that proves Mamselle, that what you says don't do to apply to every one. Now I was

once only a maid in the kitchen, and then afterwards I came to be a cook, and then after that I was made house-keeper by my lady, that you was a stopping with, and it's only nat'ral that I should pride myself upon my advancements."

"You have reason I am sure, Mrs. Margery," said Miss Duneville, speaking very loud in order to prevent a confused noise that now proceeded from the cupboard, being heard by her visitor, "I have never heard any one able to, what you call it, boast like you."

"That has so much reason for doing of it," said Mrs. Margery, now glancing enquiringly for the first time at the cupboard, "what has so much reason, you mean, Mamselle, because it's not that I does it, I would scorn the haction, I would."

"Of course I mean," said Miss Duneville, with increasing disquietude, "that you have reason to do so. But now

Mrs. Margery, do tell me how Lady Carlbrook's family is?"

"Things are just as straight and reg'lar as if nothing had happened," replied Mrs. Margery, speaking very slowly, "which when people expects them to be all topsy turvy, is not as they ought to be, and is disappointing. Now this is what I says, altho' I'm not a person of any learnin, that when there's reason for a skrimmage, and there ought to be a skrimmage, why have a skrimmage, and don't try to get patching up of things merely to have them a bursting out again."

"But perhaps, Mrs. Margery, everything will go on smoothly without,—what you call it,—a skimge?"

"Skrimmage,—skrimmage," reiterated Mrs. Margery, with great emphasis. No—that's quite against all reason, mamselle, begging your pardon. How I asks is it to be expected that young ladies who be so headstrong, (and I

don't say how they get to be so, whether its the books that makes 'em so or not) will do what's right and what's proper for the future, when nothing is said to them for what's past?"

"But perhaps Lady Carlbrook spoke to her daughter in private, and you see, Mrs. Margery, that I am obliged to go away."

"And that's just what I have said all along," resumed Mrs. Margery, vehemently, "that there's the shame. How could you help it, if my lady Clara would go for to dodge you all round the trees till she got off with her lover—lover, indeed!" continued the ci-devant wielder of ladles and dish cloths, in a still more excited tone. "It's a deal I've seen, mamselle, but I am sure as how I can say it with a clean conscience, that come what would, I never yet demeaned myself by having a lover."

"Well, then, Mrs. Margery," said

Miss Duneville, who wished to hear what version of the affair in Kensington Gardens had been adopted by her visitor, "you think it was wrong in Lady Carlbrook to blame me?"

"Ay, sure," returned Mrs. Margery, "how could you help it, is what I asks, if my young lady would go a running away to that Mr. Pinktail, for I heard as how that was his name, and they can't surely go for to blame you for what took place afterwards."

"No; I suppose not. You heard all about it, then, Mrs. Margery?"

"Ay, sure! They tells me as how you were at last obliged to send for my lady and young master. When they comed, he, that's young master, stood before 'em in his uniform and drawn sword, and then that Mr. Pinktail ran off with all his legs."

"How did you hear that, Mrs. Margery?"

"Oh, I heard it from Mogson, who

is the only person I descends to be confidential with, and he heard it from Thomas, who says that Mary and Jane both told him the same story, so I knew that it was all as it happened."

Their further conversation was here interrupted by a tremendous skrimmage (to borrow a word from Mrs. Margery's vocabulary) inside the cupboard, where Pinkem was ensconsed, and of which Mrs. Margery now most pertinaciously persisted in ascertaining the cause. The fact was, that a black cat, of unusual dimensions, and of a very fierce disposition, had long made the lodging house her domicile, and though owned by no one, managed to get a very good livelihood, by strolling about from the rooms of one lodger to those of another. It so happened, that in consequence of this identical suite of rooms having for some time been unoccupied, she had chosen the cupboard in one of them to bring up a family of young grimalkins,



and looking upon it therefore *pro tempore* as her lawful habitation, she had witnessed the intrusion upon her privacy with considerable indignation. Her disapprobation was at first expressed by hissing, and those other amiable modes of evincing their feelings, practised by animals of a feline nature. Finding however that these indications did not produce the desired effect, and emboldened perhaps by the inactivity of the enemy, she proceeded to overt acts of aggression, and commenced waging war with her teeth and claws upon the varnished boots and fashionably striped trousers of the intruder, which at length so exasperated their owner, that he lifted his foot and hurled her to the other end of the cupboard amidst her kittens. This decided measure created a noise which, proceeding as it did from a close recess in the wall, excited Mrs. Margery's curiosity to such an extent, that nothing short of its gratification would appease

her. In vain did Miss Duneville manoeuvre so as to get her chair in the way, Mrs. Margery pushed it with its freight on one side as easily as she would have brandished a toasting fork. In vain too did Miss Duneville, as a last resource, dexterously turn Mrs. Margery's attention for a moment to something upon the table whilst she managed to lock the cupboard and withdraw the key. Alas! It was not bolted within, and no sooner had Mrs. Margery applied her strong hand to the door, than it instantly yielded, and to her amazement there sprang out, with a wild scream like that of a demon, a figure, that with two bounds cleared the room and vanished from her astonished eyes.

"Lord ha mercy upon us!" said Mrs. Margery, trying to collect her scattered senses, "it must have been the devil."

"Good gracious, do you really think so?"

"Or else," said Mrs. Margery, a new train of ideas suggesting themselves, which caused her to look at Miss Duneville with virtuous indignation, "or else it was a — man."

"Oh, Mrs. Margery, impossible! It must have been the knife boy, who has thought fit to play tricks."

"I say," repeated Mrs. Margery, getting more and more confirmed in her opinion, "that it was a — man."

"Why you thought just now, Mrs. Margery, that it was the devil. It could not, however, have been either one or the other. It was the boy."

"Aye, Mamselle, and a good big grown boy too, sure enough, for I saw his whiskers, and I'd know him again anywhere. But it's not I that wants to find fault, and it would be quite a liberty in me to do so," continued Mrs. Margery, who suddenly remembered that she had called upon Miss Duneville with the intention of

asking a favour,—“quite a liberty. Therefore, although I can't help seeing what goes on afore my eyes, yet I says nothing.”

Mrs. Margery now proceeded to rummage in a pocket of unfathomable depth, and having brought to light various small articles, such as a pin cushion, a brush and comb, two pocket handkerchiefs, sundry articles of finery, a kettle holder, and a piece of soap, at length produced a scrap of greasy paper, very much blotted and scribbled over. “Here, Mamselle,” she said, handing this latter article to Miss Duneville, “is a letter, which I should feel much obleeged if you would write out afresh for me, and correct what you see to be wrong. It won't take ye above five minutes.”

This was a request of very frequent occurrence, for Mrs. Margery, whose penmanship was not very excellent, and whose knowledge of orthography was

decidedly limited, had always, since her elevation to the rank of housekeeper, thought proper to avail herself of Miss Duneville's services in these respects. It was therefore quite as a matter of course that Miss Duneville proceeded to decipher the dirty scrawl which had been handed to her, and by the potent help of additions and curtailments to concoct an intelligible epistle faintly resembling the original. As soon as this task had been accomplished, Mrs. Margery, who in return promised to deliver a letter to Lady Clara, took her departure, and Miss Duneville, after a hearty laugh as she glanced at the cupboard, set vigorously to work again at her historical translation.

In this manner a correspondence was kept up between Pinkem and Lady Clara,—Mrs. Margery always bringing a letter from the latter on her frequent visits to Miss Duneville for assistance in the management of her books and

accounts, and invariably carrying one back from Pinkem, under the idea that it was "only from Mamselle, which don't signify." Not that Mrs. Margery was much burdened with scruples, but she happened by accident to have obtained a very good situation, and she was shrewd enough to know that if she lost it, the chances were considerably against her obtaining another so good, and very much in favour of her being obliged to descend to her original position.

Pinkem, however, was not one to allow matters to remain in this unsatisfactory state, and he now began to consider how his ulterior views were to be carried into execution. He had never yet proposed an elopement to Lady Clara, though he had selected the very day on which their *tête à tête* had been so unceremoniously interrupted for doing so. Now, there was no other way of managing it than by letter, which rendered the matter far more difficult, but as Lord Carlbrook was

absent from London, the opportunity was too favourable to be lost. He therefore proceeded to compose an epistle on the subject, which, after he had torn up about a quire of paper in abortive attempts, at last assumed the following shape.

“ My dear Clara,

“ First thanking you for your last charming letter, which afforded me, as usual, the most unfeigned delight, let me beg that you will give your entire attention to a proposal I am about to make. There are you know, dear Clara, so many apparently insuperable obstacles to our union, that only one path exists by which we can ever hope to accomplish it. I need scarcely mention which that is. You are aware that Lady Carlbrook will never again allow me to enter her house, much less ever listen to my suit, therefore you must also know,

dear Clara, that all chance of a marriage between us with her consent is impossible. But Clara, Scotland is easy of access,—arrangements such as cannot miscarry are with little difficulty made,—Miss Duneville would accompany us,—and remember that the knot once tied, no one can undo it. Lady Carlbrook calls me an adventurer, and you, who know my whole history, may not, I fear, consider the term quite inapplicable; but at all events I am not a heartless one, nor have I attempted to gain your affections for the mere sake of the worldly advantages which you possess. It is true, and I will not attempt to deny it, that when we first met in Paris, I was not heedless of the position you enjoy, or the fortune you may perhaps inherit, but it is equally true, dear Clara, that I loved you from the first for the merry glance of your bright eyes, and if ever a sordid thought struggled for pre-eminence in my breast,



that love has long silenced the unworthy aspiration. Let me beg of you, Clara, in conclusion, to think over the proposal I have made, and also to let me have an answer soon, as I shall be in the greatest anxiety to hear your decision.

“ Ever your’s,

“ H. PINKEM.”

This letter having been folded and directed, Pinkem took it to Miss Duneville for enclosure, and the next day Mrs. Margery duly conveyed it to Lady Clara. The impatience with which he awaited a reply may be better conceived than explained, as also his disappointment when a longer time than usual having elapsed between Mrs. Margery’s visits, it was intimated to him by Miss Duneville; that she had brought no reply. For the first time in his life he began to despond, but on next presenting himself at Miss Duneville’s, the long wished for

missive was placed in his hands. He hastily tore it open, and as he glanced over the contents, his countenance, though at first evincing some dissatisfaction, gradually assumed a different expression, till at last, the joy with which he was suddenly overwhelmed, being incapable of further restraint, he danced round the room, jumped over a sofa, and seizing Miss Duneville round the waist, imprinted two hearty kisses on her cheek,—proceedings at which she looked considerably surprised. As soon, however, as the exuberance of Pinkem's spirits had a little subsided, he made Miss Duneville acquainted with the contents of the letter he had just received, which ran as follows.—

“ Dear Harry,

“ How could you think of proposing such a scheme as that contained in your last letter ! If you only knew how horrified I was when I first under-

stood all that you meant. Besides, it came so suddenly upon me, that I instantly became dreadfully frightened, and I have been thinking ever since, how *unkind* it was of you not to be more considerate. You know, Harry, that even were I to consent to what you propose, it would be impossible to carry out the plan successfully, and oh! how dreadful if we were caught! I have twice very nearly fainted at the very idea. Since you told me to do so, however, I have thought a great deal over the contents of your letter, and I quite agree with you, that mamma would never allow us to be engaged, and certainly it is very true, that there is only one way in which our marriage can ever take place. But is it really, as you endeavour to assure me, within our reach? Are there not too many difficulties in our way? I should never be able to make up my mind when it came to the trial,—never. I have actually taken up

this much time before I could decide what answer to return to your letter, so you see what a dreadful state of anxiety and suspense your poor Clara would be in on the day itself, when all the *contre-temps* which she has been imagining, had come to pass! But let me hear from you again, and set me at rest at once upon this subject, by an assurance that it is altogether impracticable.

“Ever your’s

“CLARA CHALMERS.”

“P.S. Are you *quite sure* that dear Miss Duneville would accompany us?”

“Now,” said Pinkem, after he had imparted the substance of this letter to Miss Duneville, “if you would write to Lady Clara yourself, mademoiselle, and assure her that you are quite willing to redeem your promise to accompany us, I think we may remain satisfied as to the success of my plan.”

"Goodness!" said Miss Duneville, quite in a flutter, "I never thought,—but are you in earnest?"

"I was never more so in my life, I assure you, Mademoiselle," said Pinkem. "Here are writing materials, and if you will indite a 'chit' as we say in India, both our missives can be enclosed under one cover."

"Really," replied Miss Duneville, catching some of the ardour of her companion, and elated at the prospect of an event which never fails to call into action all the enthusiasm of the fair sex, "really I suppose I must comply."

"Of course you must! How could you entertain a doubt on the subject?" said Pinkem, seating himself at the table, and with characteristic ardour, instantly commencing his portion of the correspondence.

But of the exhortations on one side, and the fears and doubts on the other, which were successively urged in

this momentous correspondence, it would indeed be beyond our power to convey an adequate idea. Suffice it to say that a most satisfactory understanding was finally arrived at,—the most judicious arrangements were made, and at last, came the eventful morning which had been looked forward to with such various emotions by the three conspirators.

It was about nine o'clock when a carriage containing Pinkem and Miss Duneville, drove up to the side of the pavement, in a street adjoining Belgrave square, and the former alighting, proceeded in the direction of Lady Carlbrook's house. Having arrived within sight of the upper windows, he flourished a white handkerchief, the signal previously agreed upon. This having been answered in a similar way, Pinkem again moved forwards till he arrived opposite the door. It opened at his approach, first a little way, then wider, till Lady Clara, like a frightened fawn, was seen,

even now, apparently undecided whether to cross the threshold or not.

"Clara," said Pinkem, who saw her irresolution, "dear Clara, for heavens sake be quick, we shall lose the train, or you will be seen."

Once more she cast an irresolute look within, then she allowed her glance to fall upon the handsome countenance of her lover. Who can doubt the result! The door of her home closed upon her retreating footstep, and the next minute she was hurrying across the square, leaning upon the arm of him who from that day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, was to be her wedded husband.

They quickly reached the carriage that was in waiting for them, and immediately that Lady Clara saw Miss Duneville, she threw herself into the arms that had so often held her when a child, and instinctively clung to her for protection.

“Now drive quick,” said Pinkem, shutting the carriage door after him. “To the Great Northern.”

The last words were drowned in the noise made by the starting equipage, for the coachman had received his instructions beforehand, and upon the door closing, had instantly urged his horses to the top of their speed.

At the station they found the express train, by which they were to travel to Scotland, in readiness to start. The engine as if impatient to be off, was panting and vibrating in every portion of its powerful frame. Red hot cinders were multiplying beneath its fiery breast, and the men, at whose will the huge monster must either rush forward at a speed nearly equal to the flight of a bird, or like a submissive slave remain motionless, were but awaiting the word, to put its machinery into motion. Very few carriages were attached to it, and our party having hurriedly entered one of



them, almost immediately afterwards "right !" was shouted from a stentorian voice on the platform,—one loud shrill whistle followed, and they had started.

Now it so happened that Mrs. Margery, though not as she has already explained, gifted with many of the attributes of her sex, nevertheless possessed to a very large extent one of their principal foibles,—curiosity, and having heard the street door shut as she was descending from her room to join her fellow servants below, who were but awaiting her presence to commence breakfast, she rushed to one of the dining room windows to see who could possibly be leaving the house at such an early hour, and therefore saw Lady Clara hurrying across the square with Pinkem, whom she instantly recognised. At first her surprise so far overcame her, that she remained like one entranced, but gathering together her energies,

she succeeded in rushing up stairs to Lady Carlbrook, who, being an early riser, was seated in a morning robe in her boudoir.

"Oh please, my lady," said Mrs. Margery, in a distracted manner, rushing into the middle of the apartment, "oh, my lady!—I never!"

"Never what, you foolish woman?" said Lady Carlbrook, with considerable astonishment.

"Oh, please my lady, they're off," replied Mrs. Margery, panting violently.

"Who is off?" said Lady Carlbrook, quickly, now beginning to feel some apprehension.

"Oh, it's Lady Clara, my lady, and with the man."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Lady Carlbrook.

"Yes, my lady," continued Mrs. Margery, "with the man. Him as mamselle used to keep in a closet with the cats and the kittens."

Lady Carlbrook instantly ran to her daughter's room to see if this story were true, but she found it empty. She called her by name, but receiving no reply, returned in violent agitation to her own apartment. She was not one, however, to remain inactive, and her mind having been quickly made up, she ordered her carriage, and by the time it came to the door was ready to step into it. Conjecturing the route the fugitives had taken, she ordered her coachman to drive to the Great Northern Station, where she learnt, upon making enquiries, that a young lady and gentleman answering to the description she gave, had that morning started by the express train for the North. Without any delay, therefore, she sent instructions down the line by means of the electric telegraph, to stop the parties who had absconded. An answer was soon returned that the train was shortly expected at —— and that

the officials would be on the look out to apprehend them. So far all was well, and when about half an hour afterwards it was intimated by means of the wires that the capture had been effected, Lady Carlbrook began to feel considerable relief from the anxiety she had suffered.

Now it so happened, that a young gentleman who had just kept his first term at Oxford, was travelling to the North with his sister, to join his family, and by accident had got into the same carriage with Pinkem and his companions. So soon as the train stopped at the —— station the officials proceeded with great care to examine the interior of all the carriages, and not perceiving, except in this particular compartment, any persons that bore a resemblance to a run away couple, they were unanimous in agreeing that here must be the party they were in search of, but

they were divided in their opinions with regard to its occupants. With the hope therefore of eliciting something that would enable them to form a better judgment, one of their number poking his head in at the window, said "Tickets if you please?"

Pinkem produced three from his waistcoat pocket, and pointing to Miss Dunville and Lady Clara said, "We, three."

"All right, sir," replied the man, who thought inwardly "three of em, that's not the party." "And your's, sir?" he continued, turning to the young gentleman.

"I have shewn them to you once," replied the person thus addressed, who lisped out his words very slowly, "here they are,—for this lady and myself. You give so much trouble that it is positively annoying, and I never knew the tickets looked at here before."

"We don't in general, sir," was the reply, "except under particular circumstances. But I am afraid I must

trouble you still further. You must tell me your name, sir, if you please?"

"A very impertinent question indeed, —but your curiosity shall be indulged at the expense of your situation if the directors are gentlemen. My name is ——— and now remove that piece of obstruction, which it would be gross flattery to call a head, out of the way, as I wish to close the window. The whistle of the steam engine at starting, is prejudicial to the state of my nerves."

"I am very sorry, sir," said the official, "but my duty must be done. That lady and yourself must step on to the platform, if you please. We have certain information with regard to you."

"Step on to the platform! Certain information!" exclaimed the young gentleman in real astonishment. "Are you a candidate for a straight waistcoat, as well as tired of your present respect-

able situation? My sister and myself are travelling from Town to Edinburgh, and before we have arrived half way, you seek to arrest us! Why what do you think we have done, set the Thames on fire, or robbed a church?"

"You are the last person, sir, I should accuse of doing either one or the other," said the official, drily, "but you say that lady is your sister, if you can prove that to be the case, I shall have nothing further to say to you."

"You have my word for it, and I tell you moreover that not the slightest reason exists why you should stop us, a statement I mercifully recommend you not to disregard."

At this instant Pinkem, who had not for a moment lost his presence of mind, hazarded an observation which he took care should be loud enough to reach the ears of the officials. Leaning over to Miss Duneville, he said, "I told you so, aunt. I knew it from the first."

This settled the question. "It's all right, Jim," said one of the men, "that's them as sure as one and one makes two."

"Jim," being thus appealed to, instantly assumed a very business-like deportment, and having intimated to the young gentleman in a manner there could be no question about, that the train could no longer be delayed, and that if he did not come forth, other measures would be adopted, he yielded to necessity, and alighted with his sister on the platform, preserving, however, as it occurred to Pinkem, a remarkably cool and frigid state of mind for one who had complained of delicate nerves.

"You will be pleased to take notice," said the young gentleman, as he stood leaning upon his cane, "in order that you may not think me vindictive hereafter, that I give you all ample warning not to persist in this extravagant conduct. What the exact amount of



your punishment may be, I am unable to say, though if it depends on me, fine, imprisonment and hard labour, will be trifles compared with it. But warning I see is lost upon you."

The train now moved forwards again, and though Lady Clara, in spite of all that Pinkem could urge, was dreadfully frightened at every station at which they stopped, they arrived without molestation to their journey's end.

The next day the indissoluble knot was tied, and the happy couple, after spending a short honeymoon among the Scottish lochs, returned to London with the hope of appeasing Lord and Lady Carlbrook. Urged by Lady Clara, Pinkem exerted himself to the utmost to effect a reconciliation, but all his efforts were unsuccessful. The proud old lady had been deeply mortified, and she could not yet forgive her daughter, or control the anger she felt at her husband.

Pinkem therefore ceased to make any further attempts at present, and having taken a house in Devonshire, he and his young wife departed thither, Miss Duneville of course being of the party.

## CHAPTER XI.

The House of Commons, as it was never intended for the support of peace and subordination, is miserably appointed for that service ; having no stronger weapon than its mace, and no better officer than its serjeant-at-arms.

*Burke.*

AFTER Lady Carlbrook's ball, Mr. Munroe and his daughter repaired home in silence, and separated for the night

without even the usual salutation. On her part, she felt, after what had occurred, it would be out of place to offer any observation, and that to thrust herself upon his notice might appear like an ostentatious defiance of his authority. His motives were far different. He perfectly understood the relative position in which they now stood, and he looked with increased aversion upon her by whom his schemes had been frustrated. But though his feeling for his daughter was now one of aversion, yet he could not disguise from himself that she was pure and good, and that probably his own harshness had alone prevented her from becoming moulded to his purposes.

Feeling, therefore, that coercion would be useless, he determined to trust to the effect which time might produce on his daughter's mind, and to those possible accidents and chances which the future might develope, to promote

his schemes with reference to her. In the meantime, he bent the whole of his energies to the attainment of that seat in parliament which he persuaded himself he could make the certain-stepping stone to distinction and power ; and as the existing ministry were daily expected to resign office, and a dissolution would follow immediately, he began to make active preparations for the approaching contest, and summoned the celebrated electioneering agent, Mr. Buyborough, to his counsels.

Mr. Buyborough had commenced his professional life as an office clerk to an attorney in the country, and his talents for electioneering had first been elicited by a contest in the county where his master resided, and in which he took an active part as the agent of one of the candidates. Since then Mr. Buyborough had gradually risen in his vocation, and, like other great men, had passed through various vicissitudes of

fortune, on which he was at all times ready most eloquently to discourse. Had he not triumphantly sustained the severest cross-examination ever known before an election committee, by the celebrated counsel Mr. Browbeater? Had he not once been committed for contempt by the House of Commons itself; and had he not, on another occasion, only missed a similar infliction by escaping to Boulogne during the sitting of parliament, and by returning in triumph when the recess commenced? It being well known, Mr. Buyborough observed, that the justice of parliament goes out when grouse shooting comes in, and revives again with the London season. Had he not also, on many a hard-fought field, sustained with undaunted courage, the volleys of eggs and other missiles which had been hurled at him by the malice of his defeated opponents; and on one memorable occasion, after being

pumped upon, had he not nearly lost his life in a horse pond?

With busy officiousness, and a modest sense of his own importance, Mr. Buyborough now displayed his "street-lists," of voters before the eyes of Mr. Munroe, and canvassed, with practised skill, the opinions, character, and position of the various individuals whose names were there recorded. By common consent their attention eventually settled upon the borough of Rottenville, where the voters were under three hundred, and in which Mr. Buyborough predicted certain success, although there were already a whig and radical candidate in the field.

"I observe," said Mr. Munroe, "that after making the most liberal allowance for the expenses of printing, of canvassers, of erecting the hustings and hiring committee rooms, that a very large amount remains unappropriated, of the sum

which you state to be necessary to secure success, independently of the remuneration which you so properly claim for your own valuable services. What is intended to be done with that sum?"

"It is very easy," said Mr. Buyborough, dilating with the importance of the communication he was about to make, "to perceive that you, sir, have passed the greater part of your life in the colonies."—

"In India," said Mr. Munroe, somewhat sharply. "India is a dependency of the empire, but not a colony."

"I beg pardon, sir, in India,—or you would have known that in all boroughs like the borough of Rottenville, there is a class of persons of whose very existence the candidate is assumed to be ignorant,—persons who withhold their votes till the last hour, or even till the last moment, and whom it requires all the skill, and all the influence of an experienced agent, assisted by the unappro-



priated sum to which you refer, to induce to record their independent suffrages."

"In other words," said Mr. Munroe, they must be bribed, but what will a committee of the House say to that?"

"There, sir, you must rely upon me,—upon my honour, discretion, and experience. I have twice," continued Mr. Buyborough, becoming excited with the recollection of his wrongs, "suffered in the cause, sir. Once by actual imprisonment, and once by banishment to Boulogne, but with the precautions I now take, I defy Mr. Browbeater, or any committee of the House to defeat me on the question of agency. Odium may be cast upon me, sir, I may be cross examined, threatened, insulted, and even imprisoned, but they will never extort from me, the fact that I have the honour to be your confidential agent, and you consequently will be safe."

Mr. Munroe pursued his enquiries upon this subject no further, and with a

feeling of dissatisfaction, created in a great measure by the conviction that Mr. Buyborough would be the last person in whom he would have placed confidence in his commercial transactions, he proceeded to seek information on other points.

"I also observe," said Mr Munroe, "that my opponents lay great stress on their opinions in favour of shortening the duration of Parliaments, and the ballot."

"As to triangular Parliaments,"—said Mr. Buyborough.

"Triennial Parliaments, I believe," said Mr. Munroe.

"Yes, Triennial Parliaments," continued the unabashed Mr. Buyborough,—  
"I see no great objection to them. They would keep us alive, sir, and prevent old associations from dying away, though a celebrated member for one of the metropolitan boroughs, once shewed me a table from which it appeared, that

since the passing of the Septennial act in the reign of Charles the I.”—

“The reign of George the I. you possibly mean,” said Mr. Munroe.

“Yes, the reign of George the I.—it is all the same,” said Mr. Buyborough, “Parliaments have not upon an average, lasted more than three years. But as to the ballot, sir, you cannot too strongly condemn that un-English, cowardly and demoralising practice. What can be more natural in this very borough of Rottenville, than that Lady Mary Fidget should call on Mr. Muslin, the draper, a few days before your election, and after paying her account, say, ‘By the bye, Mr. Muslin, we are going to have busy times in Rottenville. I hope you will support *our* candidate, Mr. Munroe. Here is one of his cards.’ I ask you what answer ought Mr. Muslin to make, except that he is too happy to obey her ladyship’s commands? And again, sir, how often have we seen at the close of

a hard fought day, a reluctant voter dragged from a hay loft, sir, or even from some more obscure place, in order to secure victory to his generous benefactor,—to the candidate, I mean, to whom he gives his independent support,—dragged, I may say, to the poll, amidst the cheers of the assembled multitude, holding a bottle in one hand, and followed on the other by the agents of the contending parties, anxiously reminding him in the words of the immortal Nelson, that “England expects every man to do his duty!” How, sir, I ask, could we secure the vote of that man, if the ballot were established? Even now, with the greatest precaution, I have known such a person, either through a confusion of mind created by the exciting events of the day, or from natural stupidity, sir, or from treachery, record his vote for the wrong candidate, and defeat the well grounded hopes which were reposed in him. Depend upon it, sir, the ballot will

do very well at clubs, but there is an end of the British Constitution, if it be ever introduced into elections. 'We do not require,' as Mr. Browbeater in his celebrated speech on that question, observed, 'We do not require in England, either the Ostracism of Venice, or the Lion's mouth of Athens.' "

Silenced, but not convinced, by the fluency of Mr. Buyborough, Mr. Munroe now handed over the considerable sum required to secure his return for the borough of Rottenville, and incautiously gave it in a cheque on his bankers, forgetting that a person of Mr. Buyborough's principles, might also have his market price.

It was a busy day in the borough of Rottenville when the election took place. Bands of music, giving forth every combination of discord, paraded the county town. The agents of the neighbouring gentry were seen flitting through the streets, like the officers

of an army calling their men to the muster. "Munroe the true friend of the people." "Munroe and the constitution in church and state," covered the walls in sesquipedalian letters, and in every possible variety of typography.

Mr. Munroe's whig opponent advanced to the contest under a huge placard, in which was painted a gentleman with a very yellow face, and a very white waistcoat,—the standing emblems of a nabob with "a bad liver and a worse heart," since our first establishment in the east. This personage also bore a ridiculous but hybrid resemblance to the schoolmaster of the town and to himself, and appeared armed with a birch rod, as if about to inflict summary punishment on a host of turbaned Bengalees congregated, without the slightest regard to perspective, in the background.

The radical candidate, on the other hand, with more touching simplicity,

produced as his *cheval de bataille*, the figure of a colossal negro in chains, under which was printed, with all the emphasis of italics and capitals, an elaborate statement, charging Mr. Munroe with having been a notorious abettor of the slave trade between Africa and the Brazils, during his residence in India, and one of the persons chiefly responsible for the horrors of the middle passage.

We cannot attempt to give even an outline of the eloquent speeches made by the several candidates, but it may be permitted us, to endeavour to preserve from unmerited oblivion, the oratorical efforts made by Captain Blakeney, who on this occasion gratuitously constituted himself one of Mr. Munroe's supporters.

"Gentlemen," said Captain Blakeney, presenting himself in front of the hustings. (Loud ironical cheers from some well-dressed persons in the bow window of the principal Inn, and cries of

"Who is he?" from the crowd.)  
"Gentlemen!" repeated Captain Blake-  
ney with assumed dignity and increasing  
excitement, "I am anxious to say a few  
words" ("That's right, cut it short,"  
from the radicals, and renewed cheers  
and laughter from the bow window,)  
"in favour," ("Go on.") "in favour of  
my honorable friend, Mr. Munroe!"

This announcement was greeted with  
groans, hisses, whistling, and noises that  
defy description from the radicals and  
whigs, and with cheers from the bow  
window, and waving of handkerchiefs  
from a line of open carriages, in which  
were several ladies. The contest of  
conflicting noises too, thus evoked, was  
continued so long, and sustained with so  
much vigour by the contending factions,  
that the returning officer, like many of  
his predecessors, was obliged to make  
the last touching but familiar appeal to  
the love of fair play, which is known to  
characterize every meeting of English-



men, and to request a patient hearing for all parties. Quelled by the traditional feeling of respect, which in England is generally and cheerfully conceded to lawful authority, the living mass which the contest had attracted round the hustings, and which had previously heaved like a tempestuous sea, now gradually subsided into a more quiescent state.

"They hush their noise and lend a listening ear."

- Captain Blakeney thus encouraged by the support of the returning officer, now resumed his address with increased confidence.

"I venture to recommend my honourable friend to the electors," (with a decided emphasis on electors,) "of this ancient Borough, in the first place, because his experience in mercantile pursuits, and his influence in the mercantile world will enable him to promote, extend, and consolidate," (Captain Blake-

ney had borrowed these words from the speech of a celebrated parliamentary orator,) "I say, to promote, extend, and consolidate your local interests," (cheers from all parties,) "In the next place, I venture to recommend my honorable friend, as a staunch supporter of church and state," (repeated groans from the radicals, and cries of "No bishops in the house of lords!—" "Vote by ballot!—" "Extension of the suffrage!")

"Gentlemen!" continued Captain Blakeney, to the well dressed individuals in the bow window, "and," turning with one of his blindest smiles to the open carriages,—“if I may be permitted to say so, ladies!”—

("Women has no votes!" exclaimed a Solon, in the crowd.")

"I address myself to the *electors* of this borough." (groans and hisses) "To the educated, intelligent, and influential classes, and" (taking leave of all prudence and discretion) "not to those persons

whose title to be here at all, is more than questionable,—not in short, to a *rabble* who ”—

It was beyond the power of the returning officer to restore peace after this apostrophe. Amidst loud shouts of Apologize! Apologize! the groans and hisses were revived with more determination than ever, and as Captain Blakeney resolutely refused to make the *amende honorable* required of him, missiles of every offensive description were hurled at his devoted head, till amidst the shouts of laughter of his fashionable supporters in the bow window, he became so metamorphosed, as to render his personal identity a matter of some doubt. At this critical moment, however, Mr. Buyborough stepped forward, and with all the firmness and resolution of his known character and official position, declared that he could not answer for his patron's election unless Captain Blakeney retired from the

scene of action. This course he was at last induced to adopt, and with much difficulty, and not without personal risk, he was escorted by a large body of police beyond the reach of further discomfiture and disgrace.

We have only to add that the show of hands was greatly in favour of the radical candidate, and that after a severe contest between Mr. Munroe and his whig opponent, he was, thanks to the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Buyborough, declared to be the conqueror by the unsatisfactory majority of ten votes.

At the commencement of the London season Mr. Munroe returned to town to take his seat in parliament, and was disagreeably surprised by a visit from Mr. Buyborough, to inform him that a petition against his return was determined upon by his whig opponent; Mr. Buyborough's proceedings having, in fact, been too gross to be passed over

unnoticed. This intimation however was accompanied by an assurance from that gentleman that his seat was perfectly safe, but that, as a precautionary measure, the services of the celebrated Mr. Browbeater ought to be secured without delay. This being done, and the whole matter being placed in the hands of his solicitor, Mr. Munroe turned his serious attention to the duties imposed upon him by his new position.

He found that he had become an entity in the legislature of a vast and powerful empire.

The secretary of the treasury and whipper-in of the party he had openly espoused, took an early opportunity to leave his card, and one of the ministers, who resided in the neighbourhood of Rottenville, and to whom Mr. Munroe had been introduced after his election, soon followed this example. It appeared to him, indeed, that the first important step had been successfully taken,—that

the road to power and distinction lay open before him, and that all that remained to be done was to tread it with a firm and resolute step, in order to secure the results which his ambitious mind had suggested.

There is perhaps no assembly in the world which combines within itself so fastidious a taste, and so great a capacity of judging of the knowledge displayed by any speaker who addresses it, as the House of Commons. Certainly there is none that exercises with more unsparing severity the lynch law of a popular body, upon the unhappy bore who inflicts his dulness upon it, or refuses obedience to the expressions of its sovereign will. Such was the formidable assembly in which Mr. Munroe was about to make his *debut*. The question on which he had determined to speak was well chosen, for it related to the opening of our China trade, and the general extension of our commerce in the east. It was

one therefore upon which his antecedents might fairly be supposed to have qualified him to address the House.

Now the civil servants of the East India Company are a writing, and not a speaking body, and it is recorded that the failure of Warren Hastings at the bar of the House of Commons, was chiefly attributable to the fact, that his defence of himself was an elaborate essay in writing, when if the same matter had been condensed into an effective speech, his success would have been beyond a doubt. Mr. Munroe had so far adopted this eastern custom, as to commit to writing the instructions which had so often given a successful impulse to the fortunes of his house, though he relied far more upon the logic of figures than of deductive reasoning in recommending the principles which he advocated on these occasions. Habit induced him to adopt the same course under the unusual circumstances in

which he now found himself, and he prepared a treatise in writing, on the question about to be discussed, which proved incontestably his skill as a practical merchant, conversant with the modes in which the greatest pecuniary advantage might be derived from the existing state of things in the East, but established, as conclusively, a total ignorance of those comprehensive views of public policy, on which statesmen endeavour to base the wealth and prosperity of nations.

Armed with these, as he conceived, powerful materials, Mr. Munroe sought, and not unsuccessfully, an early opportunity in the debate to catch the speaker's eye. His appearance and didactic manner, produced a most unfavourable impression, in a place where personal advantages and manners exercise perhaps more than their legitimate influence; but his first appeal to the indulgence of the house, on behalf



of himself, a new member, addressing for the first time an assembly for which he entertained a profound respect, was received with cordial cheers, and his frank and unaffected, because sincere statement of the experience he had gained by a long residence in India, at once established his claim to be heard on the question under discussion, and was received with equal cordiality. But when flushed with the success of this exordium, he deliberately drew from his pocket a large roll of paper, in which the close and compact writing was only relieved by masses of figures, a groan burst from the assembled legislators, which sounded like the first low murmur of approaching thunder.

Heedless or unconscious of these symptoms of disapprobation, Mr. Munroe plunged into the matter he had prepared; but to a stranger the effect produced would have appeared to be a severe catarrh on one

half of his hearers, while the other half as suddenly and strangely seemed to be affected with paroxysms of coughing, which could only proceed from pulmonary complaints of the severest kind and longest standing. Still Mr. Munroe persevered with interrupted and incoherent allusions to the Opium Trade,—Macao—the Mofussil, and the north west Provinces,—and it was not till the House proceeded to assert its defied authority, by unequivocal imitations of cock-crowing, and of the sound which the identical animal that feeds on the thistle, pours forth in protestation against its wrongs, that he became sensible that his carefully prepared speech was an entire failure, and that his long cherished hopes of aggrandizement were at once dashed to the ground. Had he continued to entertain any doubt on the subject, the loud and unanimous cheer which greeted his ears, when with an air of deep mortification and wounded pride,

he expressed his intention to intrude upon the House no longer, would have effectually removed it, and he rushed from his place in an agony of feeling, of which it would be impossible to convey an adequate idea.

Shortly after these events Mr. Buyborough communicated to Mr. Munroe, that notwithstanding the surpassing talents of Mr. Browbeater and his own skill and ingenuity, the cheque he had given to provide for the expenses of his election at Rottenville, had been traced to his bankers, and that the committee were about to report his election void, for bribery and corruption. This removed any wavering that remained in his mind, and he determined at once to return into Devonshire, and quit the scene of so much mortification and disappointment.

## CHAPTER X.

What a shuttlecock of a fellow would the greatest philosopher that ever existed be whisked into at once, did he read such books, and observe such facts, and think such thoughts, as would eternally be making him change sides.

*Tristram Shandy.*

MR. Munroe on returning to Ulvacombe, dwelt with daily increasing bitterness upon the disappointments he had lately

experienced ; and those morbid feelings to which he had at times been subject since his return to England, now resumed their empire over his mind. Naturally much given to despondency, he had even in India occasionally suffered from depression of spirits. Constant and successful occupation had however there warded off the evil, but when he returned to England, the inactivity to which he was compelled to submit, again developed this constitutional infirmity. So long as his wife lived, her affection, and the pleasure he derived from her society, had in some measure served to reconcile him to his new mode of life. His thoughts doubtless sometimes wandered back to the scenes of his early success,—to the place where he had gained position, wealth, and consideration, and he would then wish to be again in the counting house, superintending its affairs as of yore ; but cheered, by her presence and society, he still preserved a state of comparative

contentment, and it was not till she died, that a blank was created in his breast, which he in vain endeavoured to fill up.

Change of scene had brought with it no alleviation to these feelings, and now the failure of his ambitious plans, prostrated his remaining energies. The means too by which he endeavoured to avert the impending evil only increased the rapidity of its progress. As his eye wandered over the numerous volumes in his spacious library, the subjects he selected for his perusal were the worst to which he could have turned his attention. The polemical controversies of the 15th and 16th centuries,—the philosophical writers, whose works ushered in the French revolution, and the Atheistical Treatises of Voltaire and Hume, were successively taken up and thrown aside. His mind had not been sufficiently trained to deductive reasoning to enable him to detect the subtle fallacies of some of these writers, or to separate what was

really valuable in the works of others from the sophisms with which they abound. Tossed to and fro by the difficulties which assailed him on every side,—the argument which he believed unanswerable to day, successfully, it seemed to him, refuted on the morrow,—he fell into that maze of bewilderment and doubt, which hovers over the fatal boundary beyond which reason rocks in her seat, and the gloomy suggestions of despair acquire undivided power.

In the mean time he became more and more addicted to solitude. He would see no one, receive no letters, and refused even to attend to the ordinary affairs of his establishment. The breach between his daughter and himself had become wider since their return, for there was less necessity for any communication passing between them, and he studiously avoided every act that would lead to a renewal of their interrupted intercourse. He thus became

a perfect recluse. His very domestics were ordered to perform their duties as quickly as possible, and he but awaited their absence, to resume those dark mental communings which made his reason their prey.

His was no enviable state. It is true that he possessed a large fortune, that he dwelt in a magnificent house, and was surrounded with every material comfort and luxury that wealth could supply, yet no criminal in a prison ever endured greater mental agony. Not a labourer was there, not a dependent of any description who eked out a scanty livelihood upon his estate, who could not truly have exclaimed, "*Nous dormons mieux sur notre paille!*" Human nature could at last bear this no longer. Remedy he must have, seek for it where he would. Nor was the search a long one.

The powerful agent to which Mr. Munroe now had recourse, soon produced its well known effects. We do not, in



the somewhat exaggerated phraseology of one, who in later years deeply repented having resigned himself to the Circean charms of opium, assert that from its use, he felt the diviner part of his nature paramount,—the moral affections in a state of cloudless serenity, or that over all, the great light of the majestic intellect, shed its rays upon his torn and distracted mind. But its immediate results were undoubtedly a concentration of the intellectual energies, a halcyon calm resting on all that had previously been unruly in his nature, clearer perceptions, and a greater capacity to deal with many of the subjects which had been the cause of so much perplexity.

He soon found, however, that this was only the ephemeral relief, which more certainly lures the opium eater to destruction. The subtle poison which he introduced into his system, soon lost its power when taken in a mo-

derate quantity. Like the Sibyl, the fearful enemy to whom he had surrendered himself, drove a harder bargain with each succeeding claim for assistance, till he who a few months previously was in the full vigour of manhood, became in appearance a decrepid and palsied old man. His nerves were unstrung, his frame emaciated, and his mind, not exempt from the general ruin, became enfeebled, apprehensive and wildly fanciful. A sudden sound made him start like a frightened child. A curtain waved by the draught would rivet his gaze, suspend his breath, and convey to him an idea that it was either caused by supernatural agency, or that a ruffian concealed behind its folds, only waited till his back was turned to poignard him on the spot. Nay, so assured of this would he become at last, that he would remain staring on a piece of drapery for hours, and not till a servant was ordered to fold it up, or remove it to the other

side of the window, would he become assured of the delusion under which he was labouring. In place of that blissful calm which he had at first enjoyed, he was now seized with the most profound melancholy. Hallucinations of the brain began to torment him waking as well as sleeping. His eye acquired a new creative power. He had but to will it, and pageants, old associates who had long been dead, and ghastly spectacles immediately passed in review before him.

During one of these day dreams he endeavoured to recall the prominent incidents of his life, and he was enabled to do so with an accuracy which perfectly astounded him. He felt over again the motives by which he had been actuated. He conjured up the individuals with whom these incidents were associated. Conversations, looks, attitudes, and the minutest details came back to his recollection, with the utmost distinctness. It appeared to him that a

veil had suddenly dropped from before his mental vision, and that the vast gulph between the past and the present had disappeared. Wandering from event to event, he at last arrived at one, in which strictly speaking, he had but acted justly, though there were so many extenuating circumstances in favour of the unfortunate man, who through his means was doomed to a long term of transportation, that even *he* had felt some pangs of remorse, on hearing the sentence which he was instrumental in obtaining, pronounced.

When in India, a native, who for some years had been one of his partners in business, was found to have forged the acceptance of the firm, to a private bill, for the purpose of carrying on some speculations of his own. It was done without meaning to defraud, and with the full intention of meeting the bill as soon as some of his private capital should become disengaged. Unexpected losses,

however, rendered this impossible. The bill became due,—he was unable to meet it, and the forgery was discovered.

In vain was it that the wretched man threw himself at Mr. Munroe's feet, and pleaded for forgiveness. In vain did he urge his claim to compassion, on account of having advanced large sums of money at a critical moment, in order to save the credit of the firm. In vain did he point out the dreadful nature of the punishment that awaited him,—a punishment far more severe than death to a high cast native. Mr. Munroe had a duty to perform, and his stern unrelenting looks, amply manifested to the wretched suppliant at his feet, that no mercy would be shown. The trial came on.—Mr. Munroe prosecuted, and the native who in common with his countrymen, looked upon forgery as an almost justifiable *ruse*, was convicted and sentenced to be transported.—

This man now appeared before Mr. Mun-

roe, writhing himself into precisely the same contortions, prostrating himself with the same abject humility, as when he had formerly begged for forgiveness, and then with a look of despair, which now shot through Mr. Munroe a thrill of horror, though it had failed at the time to move him, the apparition rose, receded a short distance, and unlike those which had preceded it, *remained*. Mr. Munroe had not as yet felt much apprehension from these appearances, and he even gazed upon them complacently, as the acknowledged creations of his own brain. But now a feeling of indescribable horror seized him as he looked on the accurately defined form, and despairing visage of this phantom. He had recourse to all the measures which had proved available in removing former apparitions, but they proved ineffectual. He willed it away with all the might and power he could command. He closed his eyes, and forced his ideas

into different channels, but no sooner did he look up again, than his glance encountered the expressive countenance and Asiatic costume of the native. He left the room, and for a few minutes, hoped that he had got rid of his spectral tormentor. But from all manner of places it emerged. From the side of the statues in the hall, through partially closed doors, from behind book-cases and screens, it was constantly peering forth. Terrified and bewildered, he rushed to his own apartment, and with trembling hands, poured out a full wine glass of laudanum, which he instantly swallowed.

The effect was almost immediately to allay the panic that had seized him, and he returned to his library perfectly calm and resigned to the presence of his ghostly visitor. Wonder also, for a brief time supplied the place of alarm, when after seating himself in his chair, it proceeded with a sort of flitting

motion to approach him. Nearer and nearer it came, till at last it took up a position by his side, and then with deep sunk eyes of an unnatural lustre, commenced staring into his face. So completely, however, was he under the influence of the opiate, that he still remained indifferent. Once he pushed out his arm towards it, and immediately it receded beyond his reach, but returned again close to his side, as soon as his hand was withdrawn.

For days was he thus haunted. If he slept, his inseparable companion was present in his dreams. If he closed his eyes, he *felt* that it was still near him. Alternately he regarded it with a distraction, amounting to frenzy, and the most callous indifference. On one occasion when the former feeling predominated, he remembered that he had a pair of pistols in his bedroom, and he instantly rose with the intention of examining the weapons, more as a means, however, by



which he might possibly obtain relief, than for any definite or intelligible purpose. On the staircase he met one of his domestics, to whom he exclaimed in accents of consternation. "Do you see nothing?"

"No, sir," was the reply, "except"—

"Except what, man? Speak!"

"If I might make so bold," said the man, who had long held the position of chief butler in Mr. Munroe's family, "I was about to say, sir, that you look like one who has just risen from the grave. If a doctor,"—

"Silence, fool!" almost shrieked Mr. Munroe, as he glanced over his shoulder. "Look there,—there. Now it laughs contemptuously. Good Heavens! I shall go raving mad."

He rushed from the spot to his own room, and snatched one of the pistols from the case. The figure seemed to shout with derision and triumph as it witnessed his frantic movements. "No—

thing can be worse than this," he said to himself, as he proceeded with fearful haste to load the weapon. His hands almost refused their office. His heart beat so violently that its pulsations shook his frame, but at last the operation was completed.

He was then on the verge of the dark unknown abyss, from whence no one returns. To raise the weapon was easy. With as little difficulty might he pull the trigger ; but would that simple action destroy for ever all thought, recollection, sense, and knowledge ? Could the spirit—that spark bequeathed from above—that ethereal essence, instilled into man—be so extinguished ? No. In all ages, from time immemorial, believers and unbelievers, all—all have felt, beyond the power of utterance, the certainty that an after state awaits them. Perhaps yonder figure had but appeared to tempt him to commit the awful deed ! "Tremble," he shouted with frenzy,

“tremble, evil spirit, and take thy flight back to the hell from which thou comest! But no,—thou art no phantom! Never was phantom’s form defined like thine. Nay, approach not. No assistance from thee I crave! Thou heedest not? Then—

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The manifest change in Mr. Munroe’s appearance, the equally striking change in his habits, and his eccentric conduct were of course fully considered and canvassed by every member of his establishment. Various and conflicting were the opinions expressed upon the subject. The lady’s maid, who had a lover in one of the northern

counties, was quite certain he was dying of love. Others, with a very knowing look, would, when the subject was mentioned, carry their hands to their mouths, throw their heads back as if in the act of drinking, and then wink. Whereupon a few would nod, and show by their looks that some sentiment had been covertly conveyed, in which they fully concurred. Then again it was rumoured that he had been poisoned, but this view of the question was quickly dropped, for fear of giving offence to the cook, who, the first time the suggestion was made, pricked up her ears and asked if any "himpitation" was meant to be cast upon her, because if so, she would very soon let her mind be known. The only person who contrived to ascertain the true cause of Mr. Munroe's malady, was his sister Dorothy. That erudite lady, since the unfortunate event in Paris, had stood doubly in awe of her brother. But time, which produces such

wonderful effects, had gradually drawn its dim veil over that untoward occurrence, and Mr. Munroe had submitted to, rather than approved of her continuing in his family. He had also, as she was aware, maintained a profound silence on the subject, and Dorothy therefore was left to pursue her studies, and assert the superiority of mind over matter, without interruption or remonstrance.

Although, therefore, Mr. Munroe took especial care to hide from those around him, the fact of his being an opium eater, and this was now the only thing about which he did take care, nevertheless Dorothy managed by dint of prying, peeping, searching, and other upright and honorable modes of proceeding, to find out, not only that her brother took opium, but the quantity, the shape in which it was consumed, and the place where he kept it. The result of her observations being so far

satisfactory, she hastened to impart to her niece the whole of these discoveries, and selected the time when they were out walking in the beautiful grounds of Ulvacombe for that purpose.

"My dear Constance," she commenced, you have often wondered at the sudden illness which has come upon your father, the effects of which are so perceptible?"

"I have, indeed," replied Constance, "though I cannot help thinking that perhaps I have been accessory to it, which makes me feel very unhappy."

"You needlessly burden yourself with grief, my dear niece, for I have discovered that my poor brother's illness is self-inflicted. It is caused by the frequent deglutition of a certain deleterious substance, of which I shall be able, from my familiarity with the captivating works of Linnæus, and more particularly with his '*Genera Plantarum*,' to give you a correct delineation."

"What can it be?" said Constance.

"The substance your father thus ingurgitates, is produced from a plant in the order 'Monogynia,' of the class 'Polyandria,' and is called 'papaver somniferum.' When the head of this plant is punctured, there flows from it a juice which, after undergoing some preparations, becomes of the consistency of pitch, and not unlike it in colour. This is vulgarly termed opium.

"Then," said Constance, "my poor father actually takes this poisonous drug; and this is the reason, I suppose, of his health so rapidly declining. How can he be so infatuated! But I have heard that it is almost impossible for those who have once fallen under its pernicious influence to refrain from it. Is this so, aunt?"

"You have asked me a question, my dear niece, which I am unable to answer with that degree of percision for which I would always wish to be most eminently

distinguished, but so far as my limited means of ascertaining the fact will allow, I should say that your supposition is correct, and to be candid, I am afraid that indulgence in this narcotic, is sure sooner or later to have a fatal tendency. I believe, however, though I say it with due submission, as on this point also, my means of acquiring knowledge have not been very extensive, that its victims are entirely free from care and pain, and that ultimately, when that time arrives, which is the lot of all humanity to experience, they pass from their state of mortal bondage to what we will hope may prove to all a happier region, under the favourable auspices of enthanasy."

"Oh say not, aunt, that my father is free from care and pain. I have marked him well, lately. His manner is nervous and excited, his countenance expressive of horror, and his eye bloodshot and wild. These are not signs of ease. Oh, my poor father, if your daughter



could only save you, how willingly would she sacrifice"—

The remainder of the sentence died upon her lips. In the enthusiasm of the moment, words were about to escape her, of which she had not considered the full import, but like lightning it rushed upon her mind that there was only one sacrifice which it was in her power to make for him, and a whirl of tumultuous feelings pervaded that gentle bosom as she thought of the possibility of saving her father's life by yielding to his wishes in that one respect. It might, she thought, rouse him to action, and once more excite his interest in matters which her compliance would render easy of accomplishment. The effect of this might be to induce him to shake off the horrible spell which was every day shortening the space of his life. But then to give up *him*! To be the betrothed of one upon whom she looked with aversion!

The emotion which these thoughts gave rise to, were not unobserved by Dorothy, but partly mistaking the cause, she hastened to change the subject of their discourse. "Look, my dear niece," she said, "how beautifully that old wall is covered with ivy. It might almost lead us to suppose that the stones themselves possessed hederaceous qualities."

"Yes," said Constance, catching from the tone of her aunt's voice that an affirmative reply was required, though her thoughts were still running upon the topic suggested by their recent conversation.

"It is a parasitical plant," continued Dorothy, "though, in my humble judgment, improperly termed so. But only listen, Constance, to the sweet song of the cuckoo. Have you ever discovered that its note is an A minor?"

"I was not aware of it," said Constance, "but I think the song you heard just now, aunt, was not that of the

veritable cuckoo, but proceeded from the little wooden representation of the bird which is on the top of the old Dutch clock in the lodge."

"Then I can tell you, Miss," said Dorothy, bridling up, "that young ladies of an adult age, who seek to cast ridicule upon the information imparted to them by their superiors in knowledge, are, according to my judgment, anomalies, that still require the salutary discipline enforced upon those of more tender years."

"I meant not to offend you, aunt," said Constance, holding out her hand, "forgive me for what I said."

"Well," replied Dorothy, conciliated by this ingenuous speech, and taking her niece's hand, "if you meant no offence, it is very far from my wish to retain the angry feelings which a misconception suddenly roused me to embrace. As we are, however, so near the lodge, from whence you say the

cuckoo's note proceeded, we will go and enquire whether your supposition is correct, which, considering the time of the year, I am inclined to think may be so. In fact, I may say that I was under the momentary impression that the present season was spring instead of autumn, a mistake, not unfrequently suggested to the imaginative mind, when the evenings first commence to be thus early crepuscularous."

"I do not think, aunt, that we shall gain admittance, for the lodge keeper generally takes tea at the cottage up the road, and scarcely a minute ago I think I saw her go out of the gate."

"Then we will follow and ask for the key," said Dorothy, opening the gate and issuing forth into the road. "You are right," she continued, "for if my eye sight, which an oculist once informed me was superior to any that had ever come under his notice, did not for the first time in my life

deceive me, I should certainly put it forward as my opinion, that I saw a plicature of the dame's dress flutter at the door of the cottage you mention."

"It is a sweetly pretty cottage," said Constance, making an effort to join in conversation as they proceeded up the road, "I have often made up my mind to sketch it, though I have always been deterred from the fear of not being able to do it justice."

"You are quite right," said Dorothy, "for art can never properly represent nature. As drawing is not an occupation for the mind, I may say without ostentation, I trust, that it has been too frivolous a pursuit for me, but I think my dear niece, you will allow that even your pencil could not faithfully pourtray the wild profusion of those climbers, on the southern side."

Constance was about to assure her aunt that she could not, when her attention was at that instant attracted

by a young gentleman, who had been leaning against the pailing that enclosed this portion of Ulvacombe, and who now quitted his position, and walked along the road towards them. Notwithstanding that Miss Dorothy had just remarked upon the excellence of her eyesight, she did not recognise this person, but supposing him to be a stranger, entered the cottage opposite which they had now arrived. Constance, though it was nearly dusk, knew well who approached. The figure, the manner and even the walk were all familiar to her. It was her cousin. Varied were her emotions on making this discovery. The first feeling was one of unalloyed pleasure, but as she recalled the thoughts that a few minutes before had suggested themselves to her, when lamenting the state into which her father had fallen, she felt that the sacrifice she had contemplated would be rendered far more difficult, if not

impossible, by this meeting. But though she made every effort to wish him away, yet she could not conquer the pleasure his presence occasioned, nor conceal the delight she felt when he hurried forward and pressed her hand within his own.

"I scarcely anticipated this pleasure, dear Constance," he said, glancing fondly at her, "though I know not how many evenings I have lately passed this way in the hope of catching a glimpse of you through the trees. You are doubtless surprised at what I say, but the Pinkems live within a very few miles of Ulvacombe, and I am at present visiting them, though were they to leave, I fear I should search for some other excuse for remaining in your neighbourhood."

"You know, you must know, Frank, what pleasure it is to me to see you, and yet—and yet"—

"And yet what?" said Frank, almost

impatiently. "You surely, Constance, do not intend to allow your father again to interfere with our happiness?"

"But suppose, Frank, you saw that father daily sinking into the grave, from causes that might be removed by his daughter's compliance with that on which he has set his heart, though it were a sacrifice which broke *her* heart, ought she not to make it?"

"Constance, you speak riddles. I do not understand you," said Frank, hurriedly.

"And yet, Frank, I scarcely know how I shall be able to tell you all. I feel that selfish considerations ought to be set aside, when the life of a parent may be at stake. I feel that there is a duty which I ought to perform, and yet I shrink from it as I would from death, for it involves the abandonment of all our long cherished hopes, at once constitutes a barrier to our future intercourse, and consigns me to one



whose very name grates on my ear, like some harsh unwelcome sound. But you look angry, Frank, when I hoped for your pity and your advice."

"You have not yet," said Frank, making an effort at composure, though his voice trembled with suppressed emotion, "you have not yet, Constance, mentioned the cause of the new views you appear to have adopted, and for which I am unable to divine the slightest shadow of an adequate reason."

"You know, Frank, how much papa has always desired to dispose of my hand; and the disappointment of not being able to carry out these wishes, added to others which he has experienced since his return to England, have produced the most serious results. I believe though, that were I to yield to what he wishes, his life, which at present is in imminent danger, might be preserved."

"A possible chance, a vague hope

of being able to produce some equally undefined result, is then to supersede all the considerations which I might with justice urge, bind you, Constance, to a different course," said Frank, greatly excited. "But I know full well who hopes to obtain your hand. I have also seen enough to enable me to feel certain that he is aware how unwelcome,—how odious is his suit. Let him look to himself, then, for if he will not listen to remonstrance, and no other measures will avail, by Heavens, he may chance to find that the law cannot protect, though it may avenge him !"

"Oh hush, hush, Frank,—you frighten me," said Constance, drawing back. "I read in your countenance that which is too fearful to mention."

"I am wrong," said Frank, making an effort to speak calmly, "in being thus excited, though it is difficult to prevent it. I would wish rather to reason with you, Constance. How can

you convince yourself that this inconsistent conduct is your duty? You forget, in the first place, the faith that you would break with me, for although we never bound ourselves by any promises, yet I will not do you the injustice to suppose that you would make this a ground for the evasion of what was in fact tantamount to the most solemn pledge. But I will place the matter on even higher grounds. How will you be able to declare before God's altar that you will love and honour one whose name even you cannot bear to hear mentioned? And yet what you suppose to be your duty would involve this necessity. My observations, however," continued Frank, again becoming greatly excited, "assume that what you suggest does not accord with your inclination ; but I may have underrated the attractions of a coronet. If so, rest assured that I will never attempt to mar your plans."

"Oh how unkind,—how unkind," said Constance, bursting into tears, and placing her hands before her eyes.

Moved to the quick by this proof of the injustice of his remarks, Frank began to express his regret for what had just escaped him, when Miss Dorothy, who upon coming out of the cottage had seen her niece walking up the road with the young gentleman, whom she had supposed to be a stranger, at this moment came hurrying up to them.

"This is a very wonderful and inexplicable coincidence!" she exclaimed, eyeing Frank and Constance in amazement, "and one which I must be allowed to remark does not meet with my approval. You, my dear neice, who I am truly grieved to see thus moved to so lacrimose an ebullition, will the better be able to appreciate what I say, when you call to mind the unpleasant confabulation which occurred shortly after circumstances obliged my nephew to take a

precipitate departure from Ulvacombe, on the last occasion of his sojourn there. As a responsible person therefore, I must object to the prolongation of this interview, a necessity I the more regret, as I not only have a deep regard for my nephew, and remember with gratitude that he on one occasion saved us from a watery grave, but I may also say, that I look with admiration upon his mental endowments, a feeling however that would be increased ten-fold, were I to see him embrace with the enthusiastic ardour which distinguishes all true lovers of science, those beautiful compilations, which I cannot better designate, than as the immortal remains of Linnæus."

"I care little for such matters, aunt, I confess," said Frank, looking gloomily but not unkindly at her, "though I have no doubt they are full of interest for those whose tastes lie that way. At present I have other matters to speak of, which, since you appear intent upon

remaining with us, you must perforce be witness to. The tongue " he continued, turning to Constance, " is indeed an unruly member, when it can betray us into the utterance of that which we are far from feeling. Truly though, Constance, I am almost distracted at what you tell me, and before we part I do sincerely beg that you will not, through mistaken motives, do that which will entail unhappiness upon both of us for the remainder of our lives."

Constance remained with her eyes bent on the ground for a few seconds, then suddenly raising them she laid her hand upon her cousin's arm, and said, " I cannot, I feel that I have no right to do it, and I will dismiss the thought now and for ever."

" May you keep stedfast in this determination for both our sakes," said Frank, drawing a deep breath, as if a load that had prevented his respiratory organs from acting, had just been removed.

“These respirations, tears, fervent admonitions and hasty promises,” said Dorothy, suddenly lifting up her voice, “are the outward signs of a passion, which I had thought, my dear niece, you had long since ceased to entertain. As I happen, however, for once to be in error, far be it from me, who have experienced the blighting effects of a suppression of those tender feelings, which nature bids all alike entertain, to offer any opposition to their indulgence between you my dear relatives, who have been so constant to each other. (Alas! that all men had this admirable gift!) No. Rather would I brave my brother’s anger, than do aught so cruel. But I now recommend you to say adieu, as the evening is rapidly verging from a crepusculous to a tenebrious state.”

This address though clothed in Miss Dorothy’s peculiar diction, was nevertheless feelingly uttered, and both the cousins were as much surprised as

gratified, at the unexpected kindness which had prompted it. They instantly, from a fear of involving their aunt in trouble on their account, acquiesced in her recommendation to part for the present. Farewell, therefore, was spoken, a hasty embrace we believe was snatched, as Miss Dorothy turned up the road, and both the ladies rapidly retraced their steps homewards. They entered the house by one of the French windows that opened from the drawing room, but scarcely a minute elapsed, before they were startled by the report of a pistol overhead, followed by a heavy dull sound as of some one falling violently to the ground.



CHAPTER XI.

Thus, Ellen, dizzy and astound,  
As sudden ruin yawn'd around,  
By crossing terrors wildly toss'd  
Still for the Douglas fearing most,  
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,  
To buy his safety with her hand.

*Scott.*

CONSTANCE was the first to enter the room from whence these ominous sounds proceeded. Her father lay

extended on the floor. His face was of a ghastly hue, and his whole person exhibited the insensibility of death. A pistol remained beside him which, either by accident or design, had been discharged in the direction of the window, as the glass had been shattered by the passage of the ball. Constance at first recoiled before this appalling spectacle, but rallying herself, she immediately dispatched a servant for the nearest medical assistance, and then with a feeling of despair, for not a sign of animation appeared, she turned her whole attention to her parent. For nearly an hour she remained in a state of anxiety and suspense. At the end of that time a surgeon, who resided in the neighbourhood, arrived. As soon as he had examined his patient, he said that life was not extinct, but pronounced him to be in imminent danger, and after hearing from Miss Dorothy, who had now partially re-

covered her wonted self possession, the particulars which were supposed to have led to the catastrophe, he expressed the greatest apprehension as to the ultimate result.

After all had been done that professional skill could suggest, the opinion of the surgeon was confirmed by Mr. Munroe evincing signs of life. It was only a moan, but even that was reassuring, and Constance once more began to breathe freely, and to feel as if a load of self reproach were removed from her mind, for in the enthusiasm of the moment, she pictured to herself her father restored to health, and in the full possession of his faculties, never again, she generously hoped, to be impaired by the disappointments which had occasioned his present sufferings.

Mr. Munroe, however, remained in a most dangerous state for several weeks, during which time his daughter was his

constant attendant. He was frequently delirious, and it was oftentimes found necessary to restrain him by bandages. Not once did he evince the slightest recognition of those who attended him, but appeared unconscious of all that passed around. Occasionally too, such deep exhaustion followed the paroxysms with which he was assailed, that his medical attendant nearly abandoned all hope; but his naturally hardy constitution successfully battled with every difficulty, and at last proved victorious.

On one of those fine days which sometimes linger in October, as if to protest against the approaching dominion of winter, when the sun shone brightly into Mr. Munroe's sick room, and the windows had been partially opened to admit the genial air, the doctor, on paying his usual visit, gave the welcome tidings that a change for the better had decidedly taken place; and shortly afterwards, Mr. Munroe, who had been

in a deep slumber for several hours, awoke, and in his eye was once more to be traced the light of reason.

"Where am I?" he said, very faintly, "what is all this about, and who are you?"

"My dear father," said Constance, approaching him closer, "this is Constance your daughter, who is delighted to see that you are better."

"Constance? Constance?" repeated Mr. Munroe, evidently trying to remember. "No, it can't be. We never speak now."

"Oh! think no more of that," said Constance, her voice trembling as she spoke. "You shall forgive me, father, for I will never disobey you again."

His eye began to wander at these words, and the doctor motioned her away, when he shortly fell again into a quiet refreshing sleep.

It was evening when he awoke, unperceived by his daughter, who was

seated at the foot of the bed, engaged with some work. He remained perfectly still, thinking over the events that had preceded his illness. At first he had some difficulty in recalling them, but by degrees they all came back to his recollection up to the time of loading the pistol.

"Constance," he said at last, "how long have I been—been ill?"

"You have now been in bed for six weeks, papa," said Constance, putting down her work and coming closer to him. "But indeed you must not talk, the doctor forbade it this morning."

"I am much better though than I was this morning," said her father. "Tell me, Constance, what were the last words you said to me before I fell asleep?"

"That I hoped you would forgive the past. I assure you, sir, that from this time forward you have but to mention your wishes, and you will find me ready to yield to them."

"In everything?" he said, after a pause.

"Yes, sir, in everything," she repeated with a shudder.

He remained silent for some time buried in thought, and Constance, thinking it would be injudicious for him to speak any more for the present, was moving away, when he recalled her and said,—

"You tell me, Constance, that you are ready to yield to my wishes in everything. Whence this change?"

"Can you ask me, sir? Have I not seen you for weeks past on a bed of suffering, brought about I believe by my intractableness?"

"But your cousin, Constance, your cousin,—what of him?"

"You know the past, sir," she replied, the tears starting to her eyes, "that cannot be recalled, but our actions are under our own control, though our feelings are not."

Whatever were Mr. Munroe's thoughts when his daughter thus spoke, he made no reply, but either the light was too strong, or he wished to conceal some inward emotion, for he placed a handkerchief before his eyes, and remained silent. The doctor soon after entered, and found his patient's health so much improved, that he held out hopes of his being able to leave his bed in a few days, but positively ordered him to be kept quiet for the present, or he would not answer for the consequences.

No one ventured to disobey so solemn an injunction, and Mr. Munroe was therefore left to his own meditations. Thoughts of a more pleasing nature, however, now took the place of those wild and turbulent impulses which ruled him before his illness. His sufferings had raised within him a more humble and contented spirit, and he was now a kinder, a better, and a happier man. Nevertheless, there was one point



on which he remained inexorable. He could not bring himself to contemplate a reconciliation with Merryweather, much less admit the thought of ever becoming more nearly related to him. Had it been any one else on whom his daughter's choice had fallen, he would probably have acceded to her wishes, but he was unable to control his antipathy to his nephew, and the mere mention of his name continued, as before, to call up a look of displeasure. Yet had he understood the generous character of his daughter better,—could he have known how deep was the hold her cousin had acquired upon her young affections, and the full extent of the sacrifice she was now prepared to make, it is probable that his newly awakened feelings would have induced him to surrender his long cherished plans. But under the firm conviction that he would secure her ultimate happiness, by placing her in a high position in

life, and that amidst the numberless new attractions such a position would present, all recollection of what he considered a mere youthful fancy, would become obliterated, he resolved to take advantage of her compliance, and to bring about, with as little delay as possible, the marriage he had so long desired.

With these views he in a short time invited Lord Marsdale to Ulvacombe.

Lord Marsdale was not indifferent to the large fortune Constance was to inherit; yet this was now far from being the only, or even the chief motive which induced him to persevere in his suit. Did he love her then? it will be asked. No. Certainly not. It would be a profanation of the word so to designate his feeling for her. But his admiration was unbounded, and therefore he had paid her the greatest attention. His advances, moreover, had not met with encouragement, and as his wishes and

even his caprices, had been indulged from childhood, the opposition he now encountered served only to increase his desire to possess her hand.

. No sooner therefore did he receive a letter of invitation, intimating that success was now likely to attend his plans, than he hastened to accept it, and forthwith presented himself at Ulvacombe. His reception by Mr. Munroe was of course most cordial, and Miss Dorothy, who looked upon so distinguished a visitor with as much pride and satisfaction as she would have contemplated a specimen of the greatest rarity, was not slow in testifying her approbation of his presence. But when with a light and almost flippant manner, he turned to address Constance, he shrunk from the expression he encountered in her eyes, and with all the simulation of which he was so complete a master, he hastened to assure her, with apparent sincerity, and in a tone of mingled courtesy and respect,

of the great regret her departure from town at the height of the season had occasioned, but added, "I can scarcely wonder at your abandoning smoky London, for what must be the most charming spot in even this beautiful county."

"I was very glad of the change," said Constance, dropping her eyes to the ground.

The listlessness occasioned by his recent illness, and his anxiety to persuade himself that every obstacle to the accomplishment of his wishes was at length removed, prevented Mr. Munroe from reading in his daughter's countenance, those deep traces of suffering which had so startled Lord Marsdale, and evidently gratified at the remark of the latter, he observed with increasing cheerfulness,—  
"I fear you overrate the attractions of Ulvacombe, and yet I would fain hope that a more intimate acquaintance, will not diminish your first favourable impressions."

As Lord Marsdale, while Mr. Munroe was speaking, approached the window at which he stood, Constance took advantage of his having quitted her side, to leave the room. She reached her own apartment in an uncontrolled agony of feeling. Hitherto, she had buoyed herself up with the hope that the consciousness of discharging what she had schooled herself to look upon as a sacred duty to her surviving parent, and the consolation she would derive from seeing him restored to health and happiness would sustain her in her self-immolation. She had also allowed herself to dwell with melancholy satisfaction on the probability that she would not long survive the trial she had imposed upon herself, and that before many years elapsed, she would rejoin that kind mother, who might now be looking down with compassion upon her. But she had overrated her strength, and throwing herself upon her couch, she acknowledged with a passionate grief

which could not be restrained, that instant death were preferable to the hated sacrifice which an enthusiastic impulse had led her to imagine she could calmly contemplate.

Mr. Munroe endeavoured by every means in his power to promote a daily intercourse between Lord Marsdale and his daughter. His house was thrown open to the neighbouring gentry, and so far as depended upon him, Lord Marsdale was made to appear as her acknowledged suitor. Excursions were planned to the many picturesque sites with which the neighbourhood abounded, and on more than one such occasion they passed within view of the cottage, which Constance knew sheltered not only Pinkem and Lady Clara, but her lover. The boat too in which her cousin's skill and presence of mind had saved her from destruction was put into requisition, and every familiar scene and association was profaned, she almost felt, by the attentions

of which she was now made the involuntary object. Mr. Munroe, in the mean time, steadily pursued his plans, unconscious apparently of the sufferings he inflicted. If Constance declared that her favourite horse had become too spirited for his mistress, the nervous feeling she betrayed was referred to some passing indisposition. If during her rides she eagerly seized every opportunity to quit Lord Marsdale, and with quivering lip and almost hysterical anxiety sought to engage her father in conversation, her conduct was attributed to a girlish awkwardness or caprice, unworthy of serious notice.

In this way a few weeks glided past. Mr. Munroe, who now considered his plans fully and successfully matured, became impatient of the time necessary for their complete development, while Constance who felt she was daily approaching nearer and nearer to the abyss in which all her young hopes

of future happiness were destined to perish, dwelt with increasing regret over each day—each hour that flitted so quickly past.

Nor was she allowed to remain long in suspense. One evening when Mr. Munroe was seated with Lord Marsdale and his daughter, after entreating their attention, he proceeded to say,—“I cannot but have observed my dear Marsdale, with the greatest gratification, the constancy with which your attentions have been devoted to my daughter since your arrival at Ulvacombe, and remembering the wishes you have so earnestly expressed to me in private, and her judicious determination to submit herself to my guidance, I feel that the period has at length arrived, to which I have looked forward with so much hope and satisfaction, and that I can now resign her to your care, with every confidence that I shall thereby secure the happiness of both.”



An ominous silence followed this address.

Lord Marsdale after the embarrassing pause had continued for some time, with a feigned diffidence, said,—“I should indeed be doing myself injustice, if I did not hasten to assure you, sir, of my lasting gratitude for the inestimable gift your kindness has consented to bestow upon me, and I would willingly hope that I may now successfully appeal to your daughter,—to Constance I would fain say—and entreat her to unite with me, in expressing the feelings which I trust we both entertain.”

Another pause ensued. Both Lord Marsdale and Mr. Munroe looked towards Constance, but she remained silent, and with her eyes bent upon the ground, seemed unconscious of what was passing.

“Surely, Constance,” said Mr. Munroe at length, “a reply of some sort is due both to Lord Marsdale and myself.”

“Possibly,” interposed Lord Marsdale,

"it would be more agreeable to Miss Munroe, that I should leave you to receive her decision, but I do so in the hope that I may soon be permitted to give utterance, without reserve, to the feelings I now refrain from expressing."

So saying he rose to retire, but at the same instant, Constance motioned him to remain, and advancing to the table at which her father was seated, she stood before him in an attitude in which feminine grace and modesty, struggled for pre-eminence, with the womanly dignity which her excited feelings imparted to her manner.

"Hear me, sir," she said, "and you my father, I pray you, weigh well the only answer I can give, and then act for me as you list. You know the considerations which have induced me to think it my duty to make a complete sacrifice of all my own feelings, and to obey you implicitly in this matter. There is another duty, however, not less impera-

tive. I feel bound to tell Lord Marsdale, that the honour he intends for me is one that I do not covet,—that I entertain not one feeling for him, which would warrant me in giving even a tacit assent to his offer, and that if I do become his wife, it must be at your bidding. After this declaration it is for him to determine whether he will take the hand thus unwillingly surrendered. It is for him to decide, not me,—and it is for you, sir, to say, should his wishes remain unchanged, whether you will consent.”

So saying Constance was about to leave the room, but the kind and compassionate look of Mr. Munroe arrested her progress. Turning towards him with new-born hope, she earnestly exclaimed, “Father! father! There was one whose judgment never failed because it was guided by the pure light of unerring affection,—whose voice never pleaded in vain,—whose memory must not be lightly invoked!—Should I kneel in vain to her as I now

kneel to you, and say this trial is beyond my poor strength? In her name then,—in the name of my departed mother, let me plead my release from an engagement which I cannot,—cannot properly fulfil.”

Taken by surprise, Mr. Munroe knew not what to answer, and Constance supposing from his silence that her appeal was made in vain, rose from her suppliant position; but her tottering limbs refused their support, and after a few ineffectual efforts, she sank senseless at her father’s feet.

Deeply affected, and seriously alarmed for her safety, Mr. Munroe loudly summoned her attendants, and when she had been conveyed to her room, bent over her with unrestrained affection and anxiety. Nor did he quit her apartment till animation was restored, and he had poured into her willing ear assurances of affection, and regard for her feelings, which recalled hopes of happiness that had long been banished from her bosom.

Upon his return to the drawing-room where he had left Lord Marsdale, he hastily said,—“It cannot,—it cannot be. We have been mistaken. I regret it extremely, but our plan must be dropped.”

Lord Marsdale had what might be termed a class-feeling on the subject of “scenes,” and he had a strong conviction that young ladies of the middle ranks of society, in which category he unhesitatingly placed Constance, notwithstanding her great attractions, were never engaged in any event beyond the ordinary transactions of life, without exhibiting more or less of melo-dramatic action. Influenced by these impressions he hastened to say smiling,—“If you will allow me, sir, I would suggest that these ebullitions are not at all unfrequent with young ladies, who are as changeable in such matters as the winds. I think, therefore, it would be rash indeed in us to attach the same importance to Miss Munroe’s conduct under existing circumstances, as

doubtless it would command on any other occasion."

"You are mistaken, I fear," replied Mr. Munroe, "greatly mistaken, but at all events we will drop the subject for this evening."

CHAPTER XII.

Quam juvat immites ventos audire cubantem,  
Et tenero dominam continuisse sinu.

*Catullus.*

ON the banks of a river not far distant  
from Ulvacombe,—before tiles and red  
bricks, shaped into unsightly square

edifices, were called into existence by modern taste,—there had been built a cottage of irregular shape and considerable dimensions, whose walls, now nearly concealed by creepers, bore that rural and picturesque appearance on which poets love to dwell. The interior presented equal attractions, and though the apartments were neither very large nor very expensively furnished, yet the numerous lady-like appliances they contained, and the presence of Lady Clara with her cheerful temperament and amiable disposition, lent it a charm which all who entered acknowledged.

Here her husband and herself had dwelt for the last four or five months, and shortly after they had become settled in their new abode, Merryweather joined them on a visit. So urgently, however, was he entreated not to think of leaving them, that after his departure had been deferred



from week to week and month to month, he at length to their great delight agreed to postpone his departure *sine die*, and to remain till new plans should oblige him to seek another abode. He had become as a brother both to Pinkem and Lady Clara, who, though devotedly fond of each other, were far from being so wrapped up in themselves as to exclude all kindly feeling for every one else.

Merryweather was not possessed of large means, but they were more than sufficient for his personal wants, and he studied so to apply his finances, that without wounding the delicacy of his friends all should derive a benefit from them. He asked leave of Lady Clara to employ himself in her garden, and her permission was no sooner obtained than every bed was planted with the best flowers that could be procured in the neighbourhood. A new grand piano made its appearance one

morning from town, in order that he might have the pleasure, as he affirmed, of hearing Lady Clara play in the evening. A couple of horses belonging to him occupied a neighbouring stable, and loud indeed were his complaints if nobody would exercise them.

In these and many other ways he found means to promote the comfort of the newly married couple, who fully appreciated the delicacy with which these various acts of friendship were accompanied. If Woodside cottage, therefore, was not furnished with the same magnificence as Lord Carlbrook's house, in Belgrave square,—if it could not display large suites of apartments, like Ulva-combe, its inmates nevertheless possessed riches such as few in this world can boast of. Happiness and contentment were theirs, and over all prevailed that generous friendship, which prompted each one to endeavour to outrival the other in acts of kindness.

"I wonder when Harry and Frank will come home," said Lady Clara, on the morning of the day which terminated in so eventful a manner for Constance, putting down her work at the same time, with perhaps the shadow of a pout upon her lip. They have been on the river nearly all day. Suppose, mademoiselle," she continued, her looks brightening, "we take a walk along the bank and watch them fishing."

"Ah yes, with great pleasure," said Miss Duneville, and we must try and not tear our dress like the other day."

"There is no danger of our doing so now," said Lady Clara, "for Frank tells me that he has had the path cleared of all those horrid brambles for upwards of a mile, and the place where they generally fish is not half so far."

"*Allons !* then," said Miss Duneville, "let us go and dress."

This was not a long performance, and their steps were then directed to a large

kennel that stood in the garden, from which there now sprang with every sign of eager impatience to be set free, an enormous Newfoundland dog.

"Yes, Wolf, you shall come with us," said Lady Clara, unfastening the collar round his throat. "You will take care of us, will you not Wolf?—that's a fine dog,—there."

"Wolf," who was by this time free, instantly testified his delight at the encouraging tone of her mistress' voice, by madly rushing about in all directions, running back every now and then to her, scampering off again as if he had been dispatched upon some errand that would not brook a moment's delay, and making himself quite hot and out of breath before Lady Clara and Miss Duneville had proceeded a hundred yards. But a great change came over 'Wolf,' if they happened to meet any one. He then ran to Lady Clara, whom he considered his especial charge, and walked soberly by

her side like a sentry on beat, and if the stranger was one to excite his suspicion, a low growl might be heard between the large white teeth which adorned his capacious mouth, and he eyed him with jealous watchfulness till he considered the danger to be past.

Their path lay through a beautiful scene. On either side, the eye in vain endeavoured to pierce the deep gloom of the woods that skirted the banks of the river, while above, the tops of the taller trees,—veterans that for centuries had withstood decay, and now held themselves aloof from their humbler brethern,—still caught the rays of the setting sun. Notwithstanding the lateness of the season, the weather was mild, and not a breath of wind disturbed the air. The river stole stealthily along. A deep and almost solemn silence prevailed, except when here and there it gurgled with a quicker movement through some narrower channel, or broke with a brawling

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sound over some half hidden shoal, or when a few withered leaves fluttering through the branches of a tree, rustled to the ground.

They had not proceeded very far, when a light boat was seen to shoot round a bend in the river, and the merry voices of the rowers soon became distinctly audible. Wolf suddenly pricked up his ears, and glanced first at the boat, and then at his mistress, as if weighing in his own mind whether his duty required that he should go and welcome the party that was approaching or remain to protect her. He probably arrived at the conclusion that there was no imminent or pressing demand for his services, for after standing with one paw up, in an irresolute manner, for a moment, he darted off, and was soon barking away at the occupants of the boat, now dashing into the river after them,—swimming on shore again.—running along the brink, shaking the water

from his shaggy sides,—rolling himself in the grass, and going through all sorts of imaginable antics. He had evidently taken leave of his senses, and for the time was not a responsible being.

“Why, ladies, we have been expecting you all day,” said Merryweather, as soon as they had come near enough to be heard. “I wonder the fineness of the weather did not tempt you to come out sooner.”

“Oh how provoking !” said Lady Clara, “We have been waiting at home, thinking you would come back for us when you had done fishing. We won’t ask you to go up the river again, because you must be tired, but take us home in the boat.”

“My dear Clara,” said her husband, “the boat is all wet, and there are no cushions here, and”—

“But you *must* take us,” said Lady Clara, stamping her little foot on the ground.

"We cannot venture to disobey so imperative a command as that, Clara," said Merryweather, laughing, as he pulled the boat towards the bank, "so come by all means."

"Thank you, Frank," said Lady Clara, "you have much more compassion for us than Harry, who does not wish us to come. He thinks us *de trop*, I am sure."

The idea of Pinkem, who adored his little wife, on any occasion thinking her *de trop*, afforded infinite amusement to the whole party, himself included, nor was it of the slightest use that Lady Clara tried to look as if she believed what she had just uttered, for no one would be imposed upon. Resuming her smiles, therefore, she continued, as she stepped into the boat, "And what is to become of poor Wolf? we must find room for him too."

This, however, was strenuously opposed, for Wolf, in addition to being wet, had rolled himself in so many dusty places,



whilst the above conversation was going on, that a thick layer of mud had collected on his coat, and he was therefore told to run along the bank. This injunction the instant they had pushed off, he proceeded to disobey, by jumping into the river and scrambling in after them. Possibly he was aware that he stood in imminent peril of being summarily ejected again, for he instantly took up a position at the head of the boat, to get as much out of the way as possible. Here, with his front paws upon the gunwale, he peered forward at his own image in the water, and looked not unlike a figure-head that had been transferred from some ship. As they approached nearer home, he suddenly became all attention. Something had happened to disturb his serenity, for he began to growl in a low tone, occasionally breaking into abrupt spasmodic barks.

“What is it, Wolf, then?” said Pinkem, looking towards the cottage which was

now in sight. "By Jove! there's a carriage at the door. Who can have come to call upon us?"

"A carriage!" repeated every one with surprise, for they knew no one in the neighbourhood, with the exception of Mr. Munroe's family.

"Perhaps," said Lady Clara, "Constance has called to—but no, it can't be," she continued, glancing at Merryweather, for he had told them that he had met his cousin, and informed her of his present abode.

"It is a travelling carriage," said Pinkem, as the boat now glided into the little creek that bounded one side of their garden; "and by Heavens, Clara," he continued as he jumped on to the bank, "I firmly believe it is Lady Carlbrook. Yes. There, I can just see her pacing up and down the drawing-room."

"Oh, Harry!" said Lady Clara, springing to his side and clinging hold of his arm, "Is it really? Are you sure?"

"No, I don't think it is, either," said Pinkem, "Lady Carlbrook is taller—but we had better go in at once, whoever it may be."

At this moment they were startled by a sudden cry of terror, and upon looking in the direction from whence the sound proceeded, they saw Wolf looking with a most menacing expression of countenance at a man whom he would not allow to move, and who began vociferating in French with all his might,

*"Arrachez moi donc ce diable de chien, quelqu'un, je vous prie ! Il va me sauter a la gorge !"* was the piteous supplication, followed by a deep bass growl from Wolf, as a warning to remain still.

"Help ! help !" continued the same voice in English ; "Some one be so kind as call off dis great dog, or he will I tink tear me in some pieces."

Pinkem and Lady Clara soon came to the rescue, and called off Wolf, who seemed very reluctant to quit his prize,

and very much astonished that his conduct was not highly commended.

"Why surely," said Lady Clara, "it must be Alphonse!"

"Yes, my lady," said Alphonse, for it was no other, advancing to meet her, "and quite at my lady's service, who I hope is ver well."

"Quite, thank you," said Lady Clara, smiling as she looked at the still terrified countenance of the courier, "You need not be so much alarmed though, Alphonse, for Wolf never bites anyone unless he is set on."

"I tank my lady for dis information, and beg her pardon, and de dog's ten thousand times for tinkin dat he might perhaps bite. I was leetle frightened,—no not frightened,—a Frenchman never frightened,—but ver much surprised at de time, or I should have known dis."

"Have you come with her Ladyship?" asked Pinkem.

"Yes, Monsieur le Capitaine," said

Alphonse, bowing very low, "Lady Harlborough start from Paris yesterday, and from London to-day, and I beg to announce dat she is now in Monsieur le Capitaine's drawing-room. But Monsieur! Sir!" continued Alphonse, as Pinkem and Lady Clara were moving in doors, "of course de dog never bite, but if one leetle chain round his neck den he not even make semblance to do so."

The wishes of Alphonse in this respect were soon complied with, and he looked greatly relieved when his enemy was secured. Pinkem then, in company with Lady Clara went back into the house, and entered the room into which their visitor had been shown.

Lady Harlborough, who had been pacing the room as Pinkem forcibly expressed it, like one possessed, suddenly came to a stop, and turning towards them, drew herself very upright, and looked very severe, but spoke not a word. Poor little Lady Clara was rather embar-

rassed for a moment, but almost immediately ran across the room, and after embracing her grandmother, said,

"How kind of you to come and see us, grandmama, I hope you have come to stay. Are you not tired? Pray sit down."

So saying, Lady Clara pulled an arm chair towards her, and the old lady complied with the request. She made no reply however to what had been said, but continued glancing alternately at Pinkem and her granddaughter, and with the exception of an occasional "Well!" uttered in a tone of injured surprise, still preserved silence.

"Your ladyship, I hope, finds our English climate agree with you after your long residence abroad?" said Pinkem, hazarding an observation.

No answer.

Pinkem repeated his observation in a louder key, thinking that perhaps her ladyship had become afflicted with deafness.

"I hear you," replied Lady Harlborough, nodding her head, and speaking in her quiet soft manner.

Pinkem began to look puzzled, but made another effort to start a conversation.

"Does your ladyship admire our rural abode?" he said, "It is generally thought to be very picturesque."

No answer.

Pinkem leant back in his chair, crossed his hands meekly, and determined to await her ladyship's pleasure. Lady Clara followed her husband's example. After they had thus sat for some moments, Lady Harlborough broke silence by exclaiming,

"Well! is there no excuse forthcoming? Clara, have I deserved this?"

"I hope your ladyship" said Pinkem, rising, "is not about to allude to the past?"

"Hush! Harry," said Lady Clara, putting her finger to her lips.

Pinkem again seated himself, and looked meeker than ever.

"I have come" said Lady Harlborough, "for that express purpose. Clara, I thought I enjoyed more of your confidence."

Lady Clara bent her head over a rose which she began most industriously to pull leaf by leaf to pieces. When the operation had been completed, she replied that there was no one in whom she reposed more confidence except—her husband.

"Then why," said Lady Harlborough, "have you thought it necessary to be at the trouble, and I should have thought inconvenience, of providing yourselves with a residence here, instead of at once coming to me. Why, poor child," she continued, drawing her hand down Lady Clara's long black tresses, "I should not have censured what was beyond recal, and besides, it was always my wish that you should dispose of



your hand as your own inclination dictated."

"Always the same dear kind grand-mamma!" exclaimed Lady Clara, leaning her forehead upon Lady Harlborough's shoulder, to conceal the tears that sprang into her eyes.

"And yet you have shunned me in the most determined manner!" said Lady Harlborough, placing her arm round her grand-daughter. "Ah Clara! I thought to remain quiet till you sought me, but my pride was not proof against the thought of your having perhaps to contend against rude trials and difficulties. Yes, Captain Pinkem, your cottage is indeed pretty, and the climate agrees with me very well, I thank you, but I wish to ask if you were ever given the slightest reason to suppose that I should not be glad to see you again?"

Pinkem, who was in a serene frame of mind, replied, that kind as they knew her ladyship to be, they had no right to

expect that even her doors would be open to receive them, at any time, and under whatever circumstances they chose to enter ; but begged to remind her that they had twice written, and that though they had been gratified beyond measure at the kind answers that were returned, yet he could not remember that there was any wish expressed for them to go over to France and see her. In short, that it was usual for people to wait for an invitation before visiting even their best friends.

“That is,” continued Lady Harlborough, “you had misgivings as to the reception that would await you, which was very wrong of you, Captain Pinkem.”

Pinkem was too happy to submit in grateful silence to so mild a reprimand, and Lady Harlborough declaring that she should now consider all their differences adjusted, placed her arm round Lady Clara, and begged to be shewn over the cottage and garden. Pinkem in the

mean time, sought Merryweather, and introduced him to Lady Harlborough, and in such good spirits were the whole party that evening, and so merrily did the time pass, that it was not till a much later hour than usual, and then very reluctantly, that they separated for the night.

## CHAPTER XIII.

As when deep slumber every eyelid seals,  
Where, by degrees, the flame close lurking steals  
From beam to beam, till all around it preys ;  
Sudden awaken'd in the fiery blaze,  
From room to room the shrieking wretches fly,  
From roofs and windows leap, while from on high  
Some 'scape by falling, some by falling die.

*Hoole's Ariosto.*

THERE are times, after the head is laid  
upon the pillow and the still hours of  
the night creep slowly on, when the

mind refuses to share the fatigue of the body, and restlessly ranges over the wide field of fancy, recalls bygone scenes, or ponders over the chances of the future. In vain do the weary limbs and aching sinews plead for the repose which can alone restore their vigour. The busy brain bids defiance to the fickle god, and drives him offended from the couch.

Such was the case with Merryweather when he that night sought his bed. The more he endeavoured to arrest the crowd of thoughts that pressed upon his mind, the more obtrusive they became. They carried him back to those days,—the happiest of his life,—when he had first visited Ulvacombe, and he long pondered over the reminiscences with which they were associated. He then took a rapid survey of his Indian career with the appalling incident by which it was closed,—an incident that had left too deep a wound for even time

entirely to heal,—and a deep sigh and low murmur escaped him as he writhed under the torture it inflicted. For half the night had he tossed himself from side to side, but sleep seemed as far distant as ever. The moment he endeavoured to control the fever of his mind, on came a multitude of ideas,—active, subtle and irrepressible,—that darted off into innumerable channels and set his efforts at defiance.

Finding that his attempts to compose himself were fruitless, he at length rose with the intention of endeavouring to obtain a light by which to read, but not being able to procure the necessary materials, he half dressed himself and sat in a chair at the window.

The moon had just risen and threw into strong relief the tall spiral chimneys and upper portion of the roof of Ulvacombe, which at that moment partially intercepted her rays. As he sat and watched that bright orb

ascend into the Heavens, he was suddenly aroused from the reflections which so obstinately occupied his mind, by seeing smoke ascend in considerable quantities immediately over Ulvacombe. Not having noticed it before he became alarmed, but still hoped that it merely arose from burning weeds, and that in the uncertain light, it had hitherto escaped his attention. Every minute however, it became denser, and a bright red flame which shortly burst through a portion of the building, at once put an end to all doubt upon the subject,—Ulvacombe was evidently on fire. Horror struck as he thought of what might be the fate of the inmates, he hastily threw on a coat, and giving the alarm to Pinkem, made his way with all possible speed to the stable. Quickly adjusting a bridle that hung against the wall, on one of his horses, and not waiting to look for a saddle, he jumped on his back, and urged him at the top of his speed

towards the blazing mansion, which served but too well the purposes of a beacon. Straight over the country he rode, swimming the river that flowed across his path, forcing a passage through hedges that were too high to jump, clattering past labourers' cottages, amidst the barkings of suddenly aroused watch dogs, and tearing over hill and dale, rough ground and smooth, till he arrived within the grounds of Ulvacombe.

An appalling sight here presented itself. The centre of the building was completely on fire, and the flames burst through the apertures where the windows had already been destroyed, in such volumes, that they were occasionally blown by the wind into one amalgamated mass, and reared their forked tongues through the dense smoke, high above the material they were devouring, as if in quest of further prey. On every side half clad domestics were rushing about dis-



tracted. Some were seen hurrying along the roof to the right wing of the building, where, from the wind having blown the flames in an opposite direction, the fire had not yet gained much ascendancy. Others appeared for a moment at windows where the smoke was already beginning to issue, and called loudly to those below for ladders or ropes, and then rushed off again to seek safety by some other means. All was panic, uproar, and confusion.

Merryweather did not long remain an inactive spectator of this scene, for he remembered with an agony too great for description, that his cousin's room was in the very centre of the burning pile, and that if she was still there, her fate was probably sealed. Dismounting from his horse he strode with rapid paces towards a door at the extremity of the right wing, from which he now saw those who had escaped along the roof issuing, and entered the building with the firm determination to rescue her or

perish in the attempt. Fortunately, however, Constance was not in the danger that he had apprehended, and he met her and Dorothy enveloped in cloaks, descending from the roof with the assistance of a couple of servants, who had become too much attached to their young mistress to forsake her in the hour of peril. They had been delayed for some minutes by Dorothy's refusal to accompany them unless they saved her specimens as well as herself, that were contained in a large chest of some hundred pounds weight, and which with the energy of despair she had herself dragged to the door of her room. Remonstrance had been urged in vain, till a column of hot smoke came rolling along the passage, and almost suffocated the whole party, when at last perceiving that her treasures were inevitably doomed to perish, she quitted the spot with those, whose lives as well as her own, she had placed in imminent risk by her folly.

“Thank Heaven that you are safe, Constance!” was Merryweather’s first exclamation, upon seeing them, and then turning to those whose assistance had been so timely given, he addressed them in terms that showed how much he was affected by their devoted conduct. Lifting his cousin in his arms, he carried her into the garden, and having placed her on one of the benches, ran back again into the house, but quickly returned laden with cloaks and everything that he could lay his hand upon, which would serve as wrappers, and with these he effectually protected both her and his aunt from the cold night air.

“How dreadful all this is!” said Constance, now speaking for the first time: “I am still quite bewildered. *You* here too, Frank. It appears all like a dream.”

Merryweather hastily explained that he had discovered the fire at its commencement, and had ridden over to

render his assistance in any way that it could be made available.

"Have you seen my father? Is he safe?" said Constance.

"I have not yet seen him," replied Merryweather," but if he is still in danger, I will make every effort to rescue him."

"Oh do—do, Frank," said Constance, eagerly, "his room is the same as formerly. Save him! Save him!"

Merryweather reiterated his promise to exert himself to the utmost of his power, and hastily directed his steps to the left wing, for Mr. Munroe's room was, he knew, in that portion of the building. Here, however, the fire had made rapid progress. Most of the lower rooms had caught, and at some of the upper ones, there was now heard a rapid crackling of window glass, and then the devouring element, preceded by clouds of smoke, rushed forth. Oh, how it tore and raced along! searching every nook

and corner, and jealously seizing upon every article whether costly or valueless, —piercing with resistless power through solid flooring,—enveloping massive beams in its destructive embrace, till suddenly deprived of their wonted strength, they gave way beneath the weight that for centuries they had upheld. To successive generations in that very house, where it had now gained the mastery, had it been a servant. It had ministered to the use and comfort of the inhabitants, but now the case was reversed. By an accident it had got free, and loosened from all restraint, it revelled with terrible fierceness and exultation over the scene of its former submission. Thus, thought Merryweather, do enslaved men deal retribution on their oppressors, when smarting under long endured wrongs, by some spontaneous movement, they burst the bonds of despotism !

From enquiries he now made, he learnt that Mr. Munroe had not been

seen since the breaking out of the fire, and it was feared that he was still in the house. On going, moreover, to a door which corresponded to the one in the right wing, from which so many had made their escape, he was informed that it had not been opened for years, and that the key was not in the lock. This statement was now corroborated by voices within, calling loudly for the door to be burst open, as this was the only egress left them, and they had endeavoured in vain to wrench off the lock, or draw back the rusty bolts. Merryweather instantly directed those around him to look for implements with which to accomplish this, and hatchets and crow bars were soon brought, but they produced little effect, and the thick iron bound oaken planks resisted every effort. In the mean time those within were exhorting them to be speedy, for the heat was momentarily increasing, and they were already suf-

fering severely. Merryweather was endeavouring to devise some means by which to force an entrance, when Pinkem came to the spot, and upon comprehending how matters stood, he made up his mind how to act with the promptitude that had characterised him on more than one critical occasion in the field. There was something in the clear decisive tone of his voice, and in his manner of addressing those around him, which denoted perfect reliance on his own resources and inspired confidence in others. The consequence was, that his orders were obeyed with cheerful alacrity. Everyone now looked to him for directions, and instead of a noisy clamouring set of men, each impeding the exertions of the other, there were soon at least twenty pairs of hands acting in concert, and all under the perfect control of one mind. The search for a beam of wood or heavy pole which he instantly demanded was however fruitless, and those

who had been dispatched upon this errand, soon came back with the information, that such a thing was not to be found.

"Here are hatchets then," said Pinkem, "down with one of those smaller trees, and lop off the branches."

These directions having been speedily carried into execution, he told everyone to lay hold of the trunk and at a given signal to use it as a battering ram, by swinging the end with their united strength against the door. When all was ready he called out before giving the signal.

"Ho! Within there!"

"For Heaven's sake be quick and release us, or we shall be suffocated," cried two or three voices.

"Stand back then as far as you can, or you will be hurt. Now," he continued to those without, "are you ready?"

"All ready, sir," was the reply.

"Then get her into a swing. That's right. Now: one, two, three!"



Just as the last word left Pinkem's mouth, the ponderous mass was hurled with tremendous violence against the door, but though the solid planks groaned and split with the shock, and the mortar from the walls fell around, yet the door itself stubbornly kept its position.

"Once more, and with a will!" cried Pinkem.

The attack was again renewed, and this time with better success. A crashing sound followed the blow, the door was shattered to pieces, and the fragments hurled against the opposite wall. Fortunately no one was injured, and the rescued sufferers were soon restored by the fresh air. All united in cordially thanking Pinkem and those who had acted under his directions, assuring them at the same time that they could not have survived many minutes longer, as the smoke and heat were rapidly increasing. Mr. Munroe, who was of the number, was foremost in expressing his

gratitude, and then made instant enquiries for his daughter. When assured of her safety, and informed that she was seated on one of the benches in the garden, he was moved to tears, a sight so unexpected in one who had with some justice been regarded as a cold and unfeeling man, that it created a deep impression upon the bystanders, and even Merryweather felt his dislike for his uncle vanish, as he beheld the evident joy with which the tidings were received. In the tremendous glare that prevailed everyone was as plainly visible as if it had been broad daylight, and Mr. Munroe therefore, when his emotion had somewhat subsided, was not long before he perceived Merryweather. Without any hesitation he instantly walked up to him and said,

“I thought, nephew, that it was your voice I heard, when the first attempts were being made on yonder door, and I thank you. My house,” he continued

with a melancholy smile, as he looked up at the burning pile, "will scarcely admit of my bidding you welcome, or I would do so."

"The inclination, sir," said Merryweather, touched by the kind manner of his uncle, "is sufficient. Even in the midst of your misfortune, however, I must congratulate you on the surprising manner in which everyone appears to have made their escape."

"Yes," said Mr. Munroe, pensively, "and it is a wonder well calculated to soften the heart of the proudest. Nephew," he resumed, suddenly, after a pause, "I have greatly wronged you. Can you forgive an injury?"

"Most undoubtedly, uncle," replied Merryweather, taking Mr. Munroe's proffered hand, "and pray say no more about it."

"Yes, nephew, I wish to say further, that the motives I attributed to you were such as the facts of the case did not in

any way warrant, and I now admit their injustice."

Merryweather was again about to beg his uncle to let the subject drop, when he was prevented by the sudden approach of Miss Dorothy, who with her scanty remnant of hair flying from her head, and with no other attire than a night-gown and a cloak, looked more like one of the witches in Macbeth, than anything human.

"Is there no lover of science here?" she exclaimed, "who will try and save from destruction the priceless collection of specimens of which posterity is about to be robbed? Your courage, dear nephew, is not about to desert you I hope, at a moment when the exercise of it would confer on you honour and distinction?"

"Were it the library of the Ptolemies that was now about to perish," said Merryweather, "I scarcely think that the man exists who would brave those

flames to save it. Can you really expect then, such danger to be incurred for the few specimens you have collected?"

"Few specimens, indeed! Thus disparagingly are they spoken of? Pray did you ever give them a close inspection? Did you ever examine the insects of a species now extinct, that are in a complete state of preservation, and which there is every reason to believe, were frozen up for centuries in an Alpine glacier? Were the antediluvian fossils unworthy of notice? or was the arrangement of the botanical specimens, some of which have contended with the fierce Simoom, or have reached their present state of perfection under the balmy atmosphere of the Spice Islands, to be disregarded? Have the shells snatched from the waves of the Caspian, the Euxine and the Persian Gulph, no place in your sympathy? Have not the shores laved by the

great Atlantic been searched in vain for"—

"Sister," here interrupted Mr. Munroe, "you are beside yourself. Had you even been possessed of such a museum as you would lead us to suppose belonged to you, regrets would now be useless; but to make such lamentations for a small collection of specimens that can with little difficulty be replaced, is unseemly and ridiculous at a time when all should be thankful for having had their lives so miraculously preserved."

"Oh! I am not unmindful of that," said Dorothy, wringing her hands in anguish. "But my specimens,—that I have cherished for years, and have fondly hoped would be handed down to posterity, under the name of the Dorothean collection! This is what I grieve at. Oh! that this were the noble age of chivalry, and that Don Quixote clad in shining armour, were here to save my-my speci-ci-mens."

The last words of Dorothy were nearly drowned in a flood of tears, and she left the spot in the vain hope of being able to enlist volunteers for a now impossible task.

A great shouting was at this moment raised by those around, and upon looking in the direction to which all eyes were turned, Merryweather saw a half clad figure on the right wing of the building, running from side to side in search of some means by which to descend.

A bright mass of flame at the same moment was swept within a few yards of the spot, and revealed the form and features of Lord Marsdale. A loud cry for ladders was instantly raised, but there were none at hand, and all hopes of being able to save the wretched man were despaired of, for the fire had very nearly spread to the uttermost end of the building, and smoke was issuing in such quantities from the door by which Mr. Munroe had been enabled through

Pinkem's exertions, to escape, that to enter it now appeared certain death. Everyone shrank from so daring an act, and not even Mr. Munroe's offer of a thousand pounds could induce any to attempt the desperate deed. Merryweather, upon first perceiving how matters stood, remained a silent spectator under the influence of feelings which he feared to analyze. He saw that none of the men whom his uncle was addressing, would face the danger for any reward that he might think fit to name, and Pinkem had gone away to the stables, to order the carriage to be got ready for the accommodation of the ladies. He had therefore but to remain inactive, and a few minutes would suffice to remove from his path, the man he had so much reason to hate. The natural generosity of his disposition, however, prevailed, and he resolved with the ardour of youth, to risk his own life rather than see even an enemy suffer so



horrible a death. There was little time to lose, and it was evident that the attempt must be made at once, if at all. Having approached the entrance therefore, he took one long breath and rushed into the house, amidst the applause of the spectators. Anxiously did they watch for his re-appearance, and so great was the suspense, that moments seemed to lengthen into minutes, and many a desponding voice was heard to exclaim, "He's lost, or we should have seen him before this," when Merryweather suddenly emerged from the smoke, on that part of the roof which was still tenable. He was evidently nearly exhausted, for he staggered and would have fallen, but that the parapet afforded him a support. Here he sat for a minute or two, unable apparently to move, when at this juncture the pent up flames burst through the impediments which had hitherto somewhat checked their progress below, and spreading with terrible velocity to the

very end of the building, cut off all retreat. In a few minutes more, the second story shared the same fate as the ground floor, and the flames darting up the walls, ambitiously strove to reach those parts that still remained unscathed. Merryweather soon saw what had happened, and understood at once the fearful predicament in which Lord Marsdale and himself were placed. Though he had been nearly stifled with heat and smoke, the increased danger of his position quickly restored him, and he looked around to see if a hope of escape could be entertained. One desperate and only chance was left, and by such means, as at a cooler moment, Merryweather would have deemed utterly impossible. Hastening to Lord Marsdale, who had been too much bewildered to notice him, he said in a firm and resolute voice :—

“There is one, and only one way, by which we can save ourselves.”

"Is it possible?" said Lord Marsdale, say how!—Be quick!

"A short delay will not decrease our chance of escape by the plan I have in view; and I wish before suggesting it, to ask if you can conceive any means possible?"

"None," said Lord Marsdale, "or I should avail myself of them, instead of standing here talking."

"Then death in no very enviable form awaited you, had you been left to your own resources. Do you see those men below, who are watching us?"

"Of course!" said Lord Marsdale, impatiently.

"But just now I was amongst them, and heard them refuse, though they were offered enormous sums, to attempt what I have done, and yet you are my mortal enemy."

"Why, I have never spoken to you before in my life!" said Lord Marsdale, "For Heaven's sake, man, if you know

of any means by which we can escape, mention it, before the danger completes the unsettlement of your reason."

"You are, I repeat, my mortal enemy, and you may well wonder why I should under these circumstances come to your assistance at the peril of my own life. I can only say that in doing so I obeyed an irresistible impulse; but I tell you, Lord Marsdale," continued Merryweather, approaching him menacingly, "that escape or no escape, you shall never wed my cousin. Now perhaps you understand the cause of my enmity."

Lord Marsdale was not a coward, but he had been unnerved by his apparently hopeless position, and he was awed by the presence of a companion, who in the midst of such dangers, could think of anything but the immediate and pressing necessity of securing their safety. He therefore made no reply to this declaration, but again urged instant recourse to whatever means of escape yet remained.

Merryweather without saying a word, led the way to the furthestmost corner of the house, and looking over the parapet, he said,

“There—you must jump from hence into that tree.”

“Good God! why it is utterly impossible.”

“There is an alternative,” said Merryweather.

“What?—what?” anxiously enquired Lord Marsdale.

“To remain where you are.”

“But I could no more leap that distance than I could fly,” replied Lord Marsdale, in an agony of excitement, as he peered over the edge.

It certainly did appear a desperate feat to accomplish. The tree though not as high as the house, was upwards of twenty feet from where they stood. The smoke, moreover, that rolled in volumes between, nearly concealed it from their view, and whilst it added to the difficulties and un-

certainty of the attempt, warned them of the momentarily increasing danger of their present position. Merryweather himself felt his resolution waver, but knowing that to let a doubt of the result creep into his mind would be the very way to ensure failure, he put an end to all indecision by stepping on to the parapet, and preparing himself for the leap.

"Will you make the attempt first, or follow me?" he said to Lord Marsdale.

"I'll follow," replied Lord Marsdale, who seeing that it was the only chance left, had now nerved himself for the trial, "I'll follow, and God be our help!"

"Amen!" said Merryweather, solemnly.

He now advanced along the parapet to the edge from which the leap had to be made, measured the distance with his eye, and then retiring a few paces, he clenched his hands and teeth, and stiffening every muscle, tripped lightly over

the space he had allotted for a run, and bounded into the air. Fortunately he alighted in the very midst of the tree, and by instantly throwing out his arms and firmly clasping one of the branches, he prevented himself from falling. Just as he had become aware of his own safety, loud shouts of applause burst simultaneously from the assembled people below, who had been watching the movements of those on the roof with breathless interest.

It was now Lord Marsdale's turn, but the irresolution he displayed boded ill for his success. At first he came on as if about to make the attempt, then suddenly stopped and retreated. A second and a third time he advanced, but was as frequently dismayed by the difficulty of the feat. Not till the rapidly spreading fire made it impossible for him longer to remain, was his determination finally taken, and then with wild gestures as if anticipating failure,

he flung himself from the parapet. He reached just far enough to snatch hold of one of the most outspreading branches, to which he clung with desperate energy, but alas ! the bough was unequal to his weight, and snapped. One short moment he was held suspended by a few of the fibres that did not immediately part, but these gradually gave way, and he fell with a dull heavy sound, on to the hard gravel walk beneath. Several men instantly rushed to the spot, and raised him up. Vain their help ! As they did so his head fell listlessly forward on to his chest, and too plainly revealed what had happened. Death must have been instantaneous !

The fire now continued its work of desolation unnoticed. Not an eye watched its progress, for in every face might be read a knowledge of the tragical event that had just occurred, and the assistance of those around being readily lent, the remains of the unfortu-



nate nobleman, were for the present deposited in the lodge Mr. Munroe, who had been so overwhelmed at this new calamity, as to have apparently sunk into a state of unconsciousness, was placed with his sister and daughter in the carriage, and by Pinkem's orders, was taken to Woodside cottage. As they drove out of the grounds, the roofs of the building fell in, and descending into the gulf of fire that raged within the walls, clouds of sparks and red hot ashes were thrown high into the air. The destruction was complete.

CHAPTER XIV.

The mind is its own place, and in itself  
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

*Milton.*

THE death of their eldest son was a blow that fell heavily upon Lord and Lady Carlbrook, though they evinced

few outward manifestations of grief. On the contrary, from their reserved manner on the day of the funeral, they of all the family, appeared the least affected. But anguish secretly wrung their bosoms. Their eldest born, — he on whom they had lavished so much care and affection, whom with increasing pride they had watched year after year, as his form expanded and his vigorous mind developed all its masterly qualities, — he, had been snatched from them at the moment when he had arrived at man's estate, and with a matured intellect was about, as they fondly hoped, to tread the path in which his ancestors had so signally distinguished themselves.

The remains of Lord Marsdale were removed from Ulvacombe in a travelling hearse, and deposited in the family vault.

Soon after the funeral, Lady Clara and her husband accompanied Lady

Harlborough to Paris, having previously placed their cottage with all its appliances and appurtenances at Mr. Munroe's disposal. Alphonse, also, to the great relief of Dorothy, went with them. That disinterested individual hoped, on coming to England, to be able to obtain more money from Mr. Munroe, by stating that he wished to marry and set up an establishment of his own, but not considering the present state of affairs favourable for his plan, he went away without attempting to put it into execution. Some time afterwards, when Mr. Munroe received a letter from him, containing a representation to this effect, and a solemn pledge to be for ever silent, he sent him double the amount that he had originally promised, and Alphonse then considering that he had extorted as much as he could, proceeded to amuse his boon companions with a detailed account of his intrigue, who testified

their delight at the recital by vehement exclamations and many an exclamation of "*vielle bête!*" applied, we fear, to the heroine of the tale.

Mr. Munroe had been shocked at the fatal event which terminated Lord Marsdale's life, but after this first impression had subsided, he was more grieved at his death, than disappointed at the annihilation of his plans,—the fate which he himself had so narrowly escaped, perhaps awakening still more those better feelings which had previously begun to dawn. Nor was this change manifested in one instance only. His affection for his daughter increased rapidly, and seldom did he wend his way through the paths that intersected the woods which surrounded his new dwelling, but he first sought her, and frequently now under the influence of a daily increasing sympathy, would that stern father stray along quiet glades and retired walks solely intent upon winning her affection. To

Constance, who had never withheld her affection from him, notwithstanding the rude repulses it had encountered, this change gave happiness beyond description, and often as she strolled along, leaning on his arm, when their conversation turned upon bygone times, and she was listening with thrilling interest to matters relating to her departed mother, —often then did she wonder whether the spirit of that kind and gentle being was near them and with the power, as she had fondly hoped before her death, of reading their thoughts and blessing them.

In this manner time sped swiftly by. Winter soon set in and spread its hoary covering over the ground. No longer was the river to be seen gliding smoothly along, but frostbound, it hoarsely murmured beneath the gelid covering that bound each bank together. The snow deepens, and while the falling flakes cover their roof, the inmates of Woodside cottage gather round the ruddy fires that

crackle and blaze within. Again the clouds disperse, and the bright ether, pure and exhilarating, tempts them forth. Not through the woods now, do father and daughter bend their steps, but to the poor man's cottage,—to the hovel where rent walls and broken windows admit the keen blast,—where hunger pinches the withered frame of age, and where squalor and wretchedness make life a burden. These are now their haunts. Here they bring relief. Not with the niggard hand that bids gratitude arise ere a boon is conferred, but plenty and comfort are their gifts, and everywhere they leave joyful looks and grateful hearts behind.

The season advances, and once more the south wind breathes over the land. The snow gradually disappears from view, and down the hills pour bounding cataracts, that add to the already swollen river, till the placid stream becomes a foaming torrent, rushing with giddy speed

through adjoining rocks, or wide-spreading over the level plain. Meantime, spring, pregnant season! comes on apace, and once more, the river subsides within its wonted limits. The trees put forth their leaves. The passing clouds yield prolific showers, and the face of nature becomes verdant with growing crops. All creation wakes into life. Man acknowledges the genial season. New vigour animates his limbs, and over his mind pour new thoughts and hopes.

May day arrives, and the vill ageswains bring round their garlands. But wherefore this dejection as they approach Woodside cottage? Why on this glad day are their eyes bent in sorrow to the ground? Does that carriage at the door where the horses so impatiently paw the earth, and where busy domestics are handing out packages from within—does that explain their grief? Yes! this is the day that has been fixed for Mr. Munroe's departure from Woodside, and



he is about to commence a journey to London. They group around the gate, and when their benefactor and his family issue from the porch, the cheer they attempt to raise dies mournfully away,—their garlands fall neglected by their sides, as if they felt that the gay blooming flowers were inappropriate to the occasion, and in every countenance is to be read the sorrow that dwells in their hearts.

“My friends,” said Mr. Munroe, “we shall not forget you during our absence, and when we come down here again,—for come we shall I trust ere long,—I hope to find merrier faces than I now see around me.”

“They will return!” resounded with glee on all sides, and the merry shouting and the cheers which greeted the party when they drove off, sent a thrill of pleasure through Mr. Munroe’s breast which told him he had at last found out a way to enjoy live.

They had not been many days in town

before Merryweather, who had left Devonshire at the same time as the Pinkerns, called upon them. How he came so soon to hear of their arrival, and why, as he knocked at the door, his mind alternated between new formed hopes, and doubts of their being possibly realised, it is impossible for us to divine, unless that little bird, which from time immemorial, has been taxed with carrying messages between persons whom relentless fate has deprived of other means of communication, on this occasion graciously lent his assistance. However this may be, Merryweather as he entered the house, was in a state of unusual excitement, which became considerably increased when he was at once shown into a room where Mr. Munroe was seated alone, for he was again about to sue for his consent to an engagement, which on a former occasion, had been so decidedly refused; and by some inexplicable means he had good grounds for believing that his suit

would now be attended with success. Mr. Munroe looked surprised at seeing his nephew, but received him with much friendliness of manner,—talked to him of the fire at Ulvacombe, and renewed his thanks for the assistance he had on that occasion given, and greatly praised his firmness and presence of mind. Merryweather was evidently gratified at his reception, but it was in vain that he endeavoured to join in this portion of the conversation, for there was a subject of far deeper interest with which his mind was at that moment engrossed, and Mr. Munroe at last perceiving his abstraction, and perhaps partly conjecturing the cause, purposely remained silent. This Merryweather took advantage of, and with eager haste instantly plunged *in medias res*. He urged his long attachment to his cousin. He dwelt upon the happiness it was in the power of his uncle to confer upon both, and he concluded by declaring himself willing to

enter any profession and pursue any path in life that his uncle might deem advisable, provided he would promise him the hand of his daughter.

That Mr. Munroe was prepared to give a favourable answer to his suit, Merryweather, as already related, had strong reasons for believing, and there was nothing in his uncle's manner or the expression of his countenance to weaken this conviction. Before, however, Mr. Munroe could make any reply, his conference with his nephew suffered a sudden interruption, which gave rise to events for which we must refer our readers to the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XV.

**C'est le crime qui fait la honte, et non pas l'échafaud.**

*French Proverb.*

It was a sharp double knock that terminated the interesting conference between Mr. Munroe and his nephew.

The next minute, Merryweather beheld his uncle Ponsonby burst into the room flourishing some papers above his head.

"It was quite impossible to keep the news a moment longer than necessary," said Mr. Ponsonby, after bowing stiffly to Mr. Munroe, "and as I arrived at your chambers, nephew, but five minutes after you had left, and the servant had heard the direction you gave the cabman, I instantly followed. Here are the papers. Take them, and if you choose, send Mrs. Mackintosh and Captain Blakeney across the seas at the expence of the nation."

"What say you?" exclaimed Mr. Munroe, starting up.

"That Frank may if he chooses, transport both Mrs. Mackintosh and Captain Blakeney, I can produce the most conclusive proof of their having committed forgery."

"That solves the mystery," said Mr. Munroe, "I wonder the truth never

occurred to me before. The will you mean?"

"Precisely so. Here is the true one, with several corroborating documents, Barjee Gopall, the Colonel's servant, acting under the direction of Captain Blakeney, stole them, but omitted to fulfil the whole of his instructions, or they would have been destroyed."

"And *this* was your reason for returning to India!" said Mr. Munroe, as he rose up and took his brother in law's hand. "Frank and I, as you may perceive, have already become reconciled, so now I must express my hope that *our* intercourse will be upon a more friendly footing than hitherto."

Mr. Ponsonby had been considerably surprised at finding Merryweather on such friendly terms with Mr. Munroe, but behaviour so unexpected, increased his astonishment tenfold, and a look expressive of this feeling spread itself over his countenance.

"Well, well," continued Mr. Munroe, "I trust you will place it in my power to convince you of my sincerity. But how," he resumed, after his brother in law had become seated, "how is this matter about which you have taken so much trouble to be disposed of? What do you say to it, nephew, for you are the principal person concerned?"

"I think we cannot do better than follow my uncle Ponsonby's advice," replied Merryweather, "considering how skilfully he has acted hitherto."

"Then I should be inclined to advise," said Mr. Ponsonby, after a little consideration, "that Mrs. Mackintosh and Captain Blakeney be requested to present themselves here at some hour this afternoon, when I will appear with the proofs, and bring with me a solicitor and two of the detective police, in plain clothes, who shall remain in an adjoining room, and only be called in case of necessity."

Mr. Munroe, therefore, dispatched two



notes to the residences of Captain Blakeney and Mrs. Mackintosh, containing an apology for troubling them, and a request that they would call at his house at an appointed hour. Wondering what could be the cause of so singular a communication, after the length of time that had elapsed since they had met Mr. Munroe, but without any suspicion, they complied. Captain Blakeney arrived first, and leaving 'Tiger' Smart in charge of the cabriolet, who, as he drove about the street, aped his master with interesting precision, entered the house, and was shown into the study, where Mr. Munroe and Merryweather, were waiting to receive him.

He had not seen the latter since he had been so signally defeated by Pinkem at billiards. But he instantly reverted to the last time they had met, and spoke in almost affectionate terms of Captain Pinkem, "Who, however," he emphatically added, "had learnt to play won-

derfully well at billiards for a mere *amateur*."

As neither Mr. Munroe nor Merryweather made any reply to these observations, Captain Blakeney, after several glances from one to the other, begged, with considerable asperity, to know to what circumstance he was indebted for the summons he had received to attend them.

"You will soon find, Captain Blakeney," said Mr. Munroe, in answer, "that it was from no idle cause you were asked to come here."

Captain Blakeney, struck by these words, quitted his seat, and advanced, with evident indecision, half way between the door and the chair from which he had just risen.

"Nay, pray be seated," said Mr. Munroe. "I warn you not to attempt, that is to say, I beg you will not think of leaving the room. All will be shortly explained." Captain Blakeney felt at

once that some discovery had probably been made respecting the property of which Merryweather had been defrauded, but he was not wanting in presence of mind, and relying upon the impossibility of any proof being adduced that could affect himself, and gathering moreover from Mr. Munroe's manner that any attempt to leave the house would be resisted, he gave up his design and said,—

“I have no objection to remain here, but I reserve to myself the right of afterwards calling both you gentlemen to account for your present extraordinary conduct.”

Silence here ensued, but very few minutes elapsed before another knock was heard, and just as Mr. Munroe said, “The explanation you desire, Captain Blakeney, will now take place,” the door of the room opened, and Mrs. Mackintosh was ushered by the servant into the room. Scarcely, however, had it again

turned on its hinges, before it was re-opened, and Mr. Ponsonby entered.

Mrs. Mackintosh looked around with surprise upon discovering who was present; but when she found that her reception was confined to a stiff salutation, surprise was succeeded by alarm. Partially recovering herself, however, she turned, after a short silence, which she had found extremely embarrassing, to Mr. Ponsonby, and said,—“I perceive, sir, that you have returned from India.”

“I *have* returned from India,” replied Mr. Ponsonby, laying a stress upon the auxiliary verb, which was far from restoring Mrs. Mackintosh’s composure.

“Your movements have been rather sudden, I think, have they not? But perhaps the voice of duty called aloud?”

“I certainly went to India for the purpose of performing what I considered a duty, and with your permission both

the object and the result of my voyage shall now be explained."

"If it is anything that I am expected to listen to," said Captain Blakeney, with a yawn, "I must really beg that we shall be favoured with as great a degree of terseness and brevity as may be consistent with the interesting information about to be imparted."

"It shall be as concise as words can make it," said Mr. Ponsonby. "I therefore accuse you, Mrs. Mackintosh, and you, the Honourable Captain Saville Blakeney, of having forged a will for the purpose of defrauding the son of Colonel Merryweather of his property."

A dead silence prevailed for a few moments after this unequivocal statement, like the fallacious calm which precedes a tempest. Both the culprits had from the first, very accurately anticipated the subject that was about to be mentioned, but they were unable to divine whether an appeal was about to be made to their

generosity, or whether the communication they were summoned to hear was to assume the more serious character of an accusation. They expected, however, that the matter would have been gradually introduced, and that time would thus be afforded them, to collect their thoughts and shape their course in the most expedient manner that circumstances would permit. By this sudden and uncompromising attack therefore they were completely paralyzed, for it not only took them by surprise, but seemed to indicate the possession of conclusive evidence of their guilt.

Mrs. Mackintosh vainly strove to conceal her agitation, but Captain Blakeney, recovering himself, rose and advanced with every appearance of uncontrolled passion towards Mr. Ponsonby, exclaiming with an oath, that he would not quietly submit to such vile and absurd insults. Notwithstanding a dissipated life, he was still a powerful man, and Merryweather fearing some violence to

his uncle, whose emaciated frame was but ill adapted to a struggle, hastily placed himself between them. Mr. Munroe, however, immediately interposed, and with great distinctness gave Captain Blakeney to understand that the same means which had been provided to prevent, if necessary, his egress from the house, would also be employed to prevent any violence on his part while he remained in it. Recalled by these words to a true perception of his position, Captain Blakeney so far mastered himself, as to refrain from attempting an actual assault on Mr. Ponsonby, and with violent, though suppressed passion depicted in his countenance, slowly resumed his seat.

"We can now," said Mr. Ponsonby, as soon as this episode had terminated, "proceed with the investigation."

"Yes, in a police court," said Merryweather, who was far from being as calm as his uncle, "for this cowardly attempt

upon you, he shall not be spared a moment longer."

"My dear Frank, I beg as a particular favour to myself, that you will not allow what has just occurred to have a feather's weight in the balance against these two unfortunate persons."

"You have a right to command in such a case, uncle," said Merryweather, evidently still disapproving of so lenient a course, but at the same time giving a silent acquiescence by again returning to his seat.

"You are now aware," then commenced Mr. Ponsonby, "of what you are accused. Whether truly or not, no one in this room entertains a doubt. But notwithstanding the certainty we feel upon the subject, we should not have ventured to prefer so grave a charge, unless we were provided with the necessary proofs to establish it. And I beg you not to be led away with the notion, that because no public



prosecution has been instituted, the evidence against you is not conclusive. If we have not sought to establish our case before a magistrate, it is from no apprehension of failure. It is from a knowledge of the consequences; and that natural feeling of horror, occasioned by the idea of subjecting educated people for the remainder of their lives to an association with the worst and most degraded of mankind. It is on your account, therefore, that we are here instead of being in a police court, but it will depend upon yourselves whether ultimately an appeal to the justice of your country, shall or shall not be made."

Mr. Ponsonby then retired from the room, but almost instantly returned, followed by our old acquaintance, Barjee Gopall.

"Now, Barjee Gopall," said Mr. Ponsonby, "will you tell us how you got the Colonel's box of papers into your possession?"

"Yes, master," was the reply.

"Well, then, begin."

"Yes, master."

"Do you understand what I say to you?"

"As master please."

"The fact is, that the man's understanding is at this moment hopelessly bewildered," said Mr. Ponsonby, with a look of extreme vexation.

"Perhaps," suggested Mr. Munroe, "Captain Blakeney and Mrs. Mackintosh have a sufficient recollection of Hindustani, to enable them to comprehend what passes, if you were to question him in his own language."

Captain Blakeney would vouchsafe no answer to this interrogatory, but sat in dogged silence. Mrs. Mackintosh, however, who had now become calmer, and with breathless interest was listening attentively to every word that fell, replied in the affirmative.

The proposition, therefore, was

immediately carried into effect, and as Barjee Gopall had at last become convinced that no harm was intended towards himself, very little "sumjao-ing"—a hybrid expression, reader, to which the word "haranguing" would perhaps make the nearest approach in pure Anglo-Saxon—was necessary, to induce him to repeat the statement, which on a former occasion he had made to Merryweather. It was accompanied, moreover, by many details which clearly inculcated both Captain Blakeney and Mrs. Mackintosh.

Mr. Ponsonby acted as interpreter, occasionally requesting Mrs. Mackintosh to correct him if his translation was not accurately given. The native's story having at last been brought to a termination, he continued, "Now we come to another stage of the proceedings, but before we go any further, I wish to explain, that as Barjee Gopall is of course

amenable to the laws for his conduct, he will take advantage of not being a *prisoner*,"—and Mr. Ponsonby laid an emphasis on the word,—“to hasten before a magistrate and put in a claim to be admitted as an approver, should it be necessary to have recourse to those ulterior measures, which we started by saying were foreign to our inclinations. On the other hand,” continued Mr. Ponsonby, “although such a course is not free from objection, particularly on legal grounds, a respectable solicitor in whom reliance may be placed, is in attendance, and if the instruments necessary to enable us to administer the late Colonel Merryweather’s property, according to the directions contained in his real will, be now signed, Barjee Gopall, will re-embark for India in one week from the present time, and all evidence of—of the irregularity which has taken place, shall as far as possible be obliterated.

“And do you think, sir,” said Captain

Blakeney, now fully aware of all the responsibilities which attached to the situation in which he was placed, "that the gross and palpable falsehoods which this native has uttered, can possibly affect a person of my position and character? Your motives may be very creditable to you, Mr. Ponsonby—very creditable, but I should think, by this time, your good sense must have shown you the utter want of foundation for this idle story."

"Of that, a jury of our countrymen will be the best judges," said Mr. Ponsonby, "if you retain this view of the matter. But I would remind you, before you finally determine, that in addition to Colonel Merryweather's real will, there is documentary evidence in our possession even more conclusive than Barjee Gopall's oral statement. I will only refer to a letter, posterior in date to the fabricated will which has been acted upon, written by Colonel Merryweather, on the eve of the battle which proved fatal to him. It

is endorsed, "To be given to my son on his attaining his twenty-first year." A very slight examination will show that it contains direct references to the disposition of his property by his genuine will, inconsistent with the contents of the paper which has been substituted in its place. Independently too of this, it is beyond the possibility of doubt in Colonel Merryweather's hand-writing, while the sound practical advice it contains,—the interest it evinces for the welfare of his son,—the many noble sentiments with which it abounds,—" here Mr. Ponsonby suddenly stooped to collect a stray letter or two which had fallen to the ground, "all, all," he continued, lifting up his face again, and replacing a handkerchief in his pocket, "constitute overwhelming intrinsic evidence that it was the production of my brother. I may also mention, as a further proof of its genuineness, if further proof were necessary, that it specially enjoins his son to carry

into effect that bequest in his will, by which an annuity is awarded to Mrs. Mackintosh."

Mr Ponsonby had scarcely finished speaking, when Mrs Mackintosh, who articulated with great difficulty, expressed her willingness to sign the instruments that had been referred to, and endeavoured to acknowledge her sense of the forbearance which was exercised towards her. The solicitor having therefore been introduced, and the contents and legal effect of the documents she was about to execute having been explained to her, she affixed her signature to them with more firmness than from her previous agitation might have been expected. Mr. Munroe and Merryweather then joined Mr. Ponsonby in re-assuring her that neither she herself, nor Captain Blakeney, need be under any apprehension as to the future, and that no opposition would now be made to their leaving the house whenever

they should see fit,—a permission of which Captain Blakeney immediately availed himself.

Mrs. Mackintosh also turned towards the door to depart, but she was evidently so unequal to the effort, that in a moment Merryweather was by her side. With his assistance she managed to reach her carriage,—the coachman had received his directions—all was in readiness to start, but Merryweather still stood irresolutely at the carriage door. At last, as if overcoming his scruples, he leant forward and taking the hand of Mrs. Mackintosh, said in a kindly tone,—“Let there be peace between us. Let all be forgotten ; and do not allow what has happened to day to interfere with your happiness.”

Her handkerchief was before her face, but Merryweather heard her reply, “‘Faith, hope, charity, but the greatest of these is charity.’ You have indeed taught me the meaning of these words.”



The carriage door was closed. The horses bounded forwards, and Mrs. Mackintosh was conveyed for the last time to Eaton place. The next day she gave instructions to sell the house, furniture and everything she possessed but her actual wardrobe, and insisted upon handing over the proceeds of the sale to Merryweather.

To this, he would not raise any objection, perceiving that the voluntary sacrifice tended to alleviate the remorse to which she was now a prey. Her annuity, which after much persuasion, she consented to receive, was sufficient, however, to secure her all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life, and it is believed that her piety though less ostentatious, is more sincere than the religious professions she formerly made. It is also in our power to record, that neither Mr. Wiggles, nor his literary rival, the author of the "Invisible Breastplate,"

are now included in the circle of her acquaintances.

Captain Blakeney finding after the cessation of the considerable income he received from Mrs. Mackintosh, that he was unable to command in England, either the position in society, or the luxuries which habit had made necessary to him, betook himself abroad, and is now one of the most constant frequenters of the gaming tables at Aix-la-Chapelle, Baden-Baden, and other places of the same character.

Mr. Munroe, shortly after these events, gave his formal consent to the marriage of Merryweather and his cousin, and when Ulvacombe is rebuilt, they are to be the first to enter the new mansion, as bride and bridegroom.

Mr. Ponsonby, whose period of service has expired, will also be present at the marriage. Constance has heard from Lady Clara, lately, who writes her word that Lady Harlborough has determined

to abandon France and to reside with them in England, but she declares that she will never part with her dear cottage at Woodside. Miss Duneville in the mean time inhabits it, and has asked Dorothy to come and keep her company, —an invitation that has been accepted by the latter lady, who is steadily engaged in re-collecting botanical and other specimens.

FINIS.







